

DRAGON+



R.A. SALAVATORE

The return of Drizzt

RAGE OF DEMONS

Can you fight the madness?

**SWORD
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LEGENDS**

10 things you
need to know



**SWORD COAST
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Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 3

I'm delighted to welcome you to Issue 3 of Dragon+, the all-new Dungeons & Dragons app for smart devices. While we'd like to ease you gently into our world, following the subsidence of the recent catastrophic elemental threats, this is no time to get comfortable. Something stirs in the Underdark.



Introducing Rage of Demons

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Ways to Play Rage of Demons

Rage of Demons, the colossal new Dungeons & Dragons storyline, lands on computer, console, tabletop and hardcover novel. How will you enjoy it?



Streaming Highlights

Including pro tips for DMs, Acquisitions Inc.'s latest maddening endeavor, a rundown of the top ten D&D monsters, all the action from Critical Role's live game and a look back at D&D Extra Life 2014.



Interview: RA Salvatore

Fantasy author The creator of Drizzt Do'Urden has been heavily involved in the upcoming Rage of Demons storyline. Dragon+ spoke to him about his past, present and future...



Unwrapping Sword Coast Legends

The team behind the upcoming CRPG finally lifts the lid on its epic world and its character-building features...

ISSUE 3





Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide

Lead Designer of Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide, Steve Kenson, introduces a major new resource for players and Dungeon Masters adventuring on the Sword Coast.

Community: Underdark Spell Components

There's no convenience store selling crucial spell components when your back's against the rock face in the Underdark. Could naturally occurring materials stand in for their above-ground counterparts?



D&D Extra Life Team Returns

The Dungeons & Dragons team is leveling up its game this year for Extra Life.

ISSUE 3

D&D Adventurer's League

Rage of Demons is coming and the D&D Adventurers League will be at the forefront of the battle. Get in on the action with a free download of the first adventure!



Comic: Gauntlet Gophers 03

Next Issue: Dragon 04

There's no need to cast Divination to discover next issue's goodies: we speak to Forgotten Realms creator Ed Greenwood about his latest novel, remember Dungeons & Dragons videogames gone by and dig deep into the latest action RPG Sword Coast Legends.

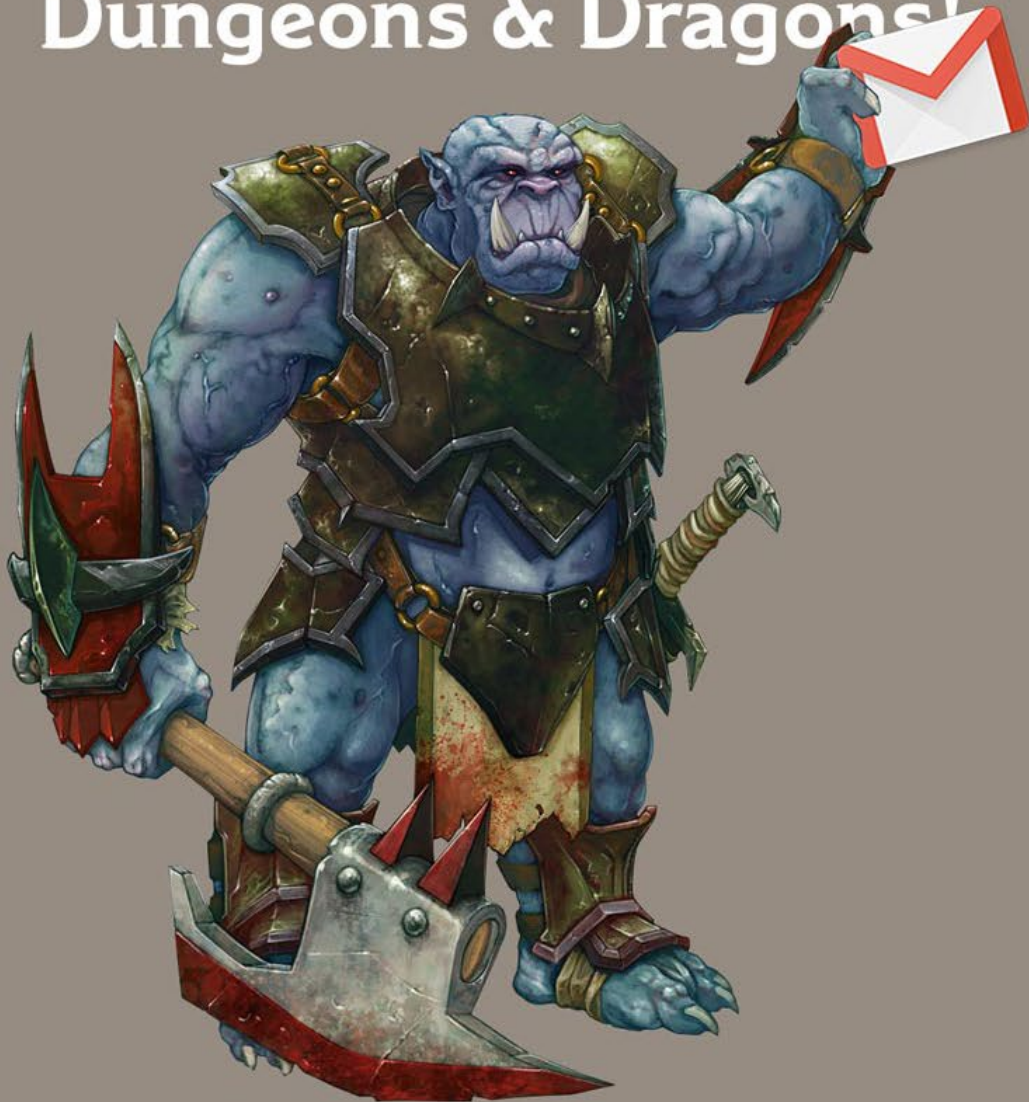
ISSUE 3



A big thank you to the extended D&D family for their help with the creation of this issue.

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DRAGON+ 3

Welcome to Dragon+ Issue 3

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Matt Chapman

Already a deadly, subterranean realm inhabited by the most dangerous monsters of D&D, the Underdark has now been invaded by the chaotic demon lords. Join us as we dig deep into this terrifying place and reveal the true horrors of the all-new Dungeons & Dragons storyline, *Rage of Demons*. We'll be taking an in-depth look at the current Underdark inhabitants and their powerful new neighbors (see page five), as well as showing you how this amazing story touches every element of the D&D world (see page six).

An unlikely beacon of light in this twilight world is a drow named Drizzt Do'Urden. While this Forgotten Realms character will need no introduction for many players, if this is your first meeting with him, you're in for a treat. Drizzt is no stranger to the Underdark and he seeks to get to the root of the demonic threat and end it for good. His creator, *New York Times* best-selling author, R.A. Salvatore (see page ten) has some killer advice on what not to do should you bump into Drizzt in-game – you'd think if anyone should know better, it would be Bob!

Naturally, this issue's cover artist has been inspired by the demonic threat. Our *Rage of Demons* cover is also the first to feature a sculpture, created by the very talented Virginie Ropars ([Google her](#) to see more of her amazing works). Virginie came to D&D at the age of 10 and was immediately impressed by the drawings, the designs and all the worlds and creatures described in those game books. "I suppose this all fed my imagination," she told *Dragon+* when we chatted with her.

SEE ZUGGTMOY COME ALIVE:



Creating the sculpture had both its advantages and drawbacks over a piece of art that has been painted or illustrated.

“It’s the same and different,” she explains. “I tend to construct my sculpture as illustrations most of the time, but the creation is very different. In a drawing or a painting you can suggest things and leave a lot of things in the mist if you don’t want to describe them too much, which can be very convenient sometimes and give the drawing a lot of mystery.

“With a sculpture you have to find other ways to create the mystery. It’s a complete object, people can hold it in their hands and turn it around, so it’s not like a painting or drawing. It is less of a window to another world, and more like putting a little piece of another world on the table.”

Many readers will recognize the sculpted figure as the demon lord Zuggtmoy, who can appear in a female form as she’s portrayed, but is actually fungal in nature. It was important to Virginie that she incorporate that organic look into her creation.

“Even if she appears as a woman, it is just a form – the shape of a woman – and she’s still made out of mushrooms and fungus. I wanted to keep that sickness; it is what makes her absolutely fascinating to me. In the real world, fungus is a mixture of death and beauty. I like the idea that Zuggtmoy, in a way, is a twisted reflection of the real world.”

Zuggtmoy may be the central subject, but the iconic D&D Dragon Ampersand is entwined around her. Virginie says it was difficult to envision them together at first, until she hit upon the idea of making the Ampersand a sort of infected creature, allowing her to work on both at the same time.

“As Zuggtmoy is an invasive fungus that spreads and turns every living creature into her mushy slave, the basic idea is that she bends the Ampersand Dragon to her will, turning it into an infected dragon. As she is a powerful demon, I thought it was great to show

the dragon becoming her sort of pet! If I can render it properly, the dragon will spread spores and mycelium with his breath, instead of fire.”

Matt Chapman, Editor-in-chief

[email matt](#)



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Introducing Rage of Demons

The already substantial dangers of the Underdark have been multiplied by the presence of several demon lords, who have escaped the abyss to spread their insanity and lay waste to the worlds below and above. Can you stop the madness before it consumes you?

There's never a dull moment in the Underdark. Fear reigns in this subterranean wonderland, which is home to horrific monsters that have never seen the light of day. The darkness alone can drive you mad. Despite that, traders and other travelers maintain contact between the surface and those who dwell in this vast and twisted labyrinth. Until now...

As a major new Dungeons & Dragons storyline kicks off, the Underdark goes quiet. Those who regularly travel between these two different worlds are conspicuously absent, as wild rumors spread in dimly lit taverns and dark alleys. They talk of a foul spell cast by the Archmage of Menzoberranzan, a dark elf called Gromph Baenre, which was meant to ignite the faerzress – a magical energy that suffuses the Underdark.

Word has it this spell went disastrously wrong, instead tearing open portals to the demonic Abyss. They say what stepped through those portals surprised even Baenre. Names of powerful demon lords such as Demogorgon, Orcus and Graz'zt are whispered, as reports begin to filter up to the cities of the Sword Coast that the denizens of the

Underdark are being terrorized.



Chris Perkins, Principal Designer on *Dungeons & Dragons* at Wizards of the Coast, worked with his story team and authors R.A. Salvatore and Troy Denning to revisit the Underdark. Salvatore, who is affectionately referred to as “Bob” by the team, signed on as a story consultant several months before he was slated to begin writing his novel telling the same events.

“We told Bob about our plan to revisit the Underdark and use his novel to set the events of our *Rage of Demons* story in motion. Our discussions led to the idea of Baenre’s terrible spell, which has far-reaching consequences for the Underdark and potentially the surface world as well,” Perkins tells *Dragon+*.

“Troy Denning, another D&D novelist, was also a consultant on *Rage of Demons*. Both authors spent a week at Wizards of the Coast helping us break the story. Whereas Bob’s novel kicks off the *Rage of Demons* story, Troy helped develop a storyline involving another demon lord: Orcus.” Some of those ideas will feature in a short story by Adam Lee in the next issue of *Dragon+*.



“Once we started talking about the setting and the base story, the ideas for the novel flowed from there and we came up with some great stuff,” adds Adam Lee, Designer for Dungeons & Dragons at Wizards of the Coast. “After the story summit, Bob went off to his arcane sanctum and wrote an amazing tale with all the trimmings.”

Sanity Check

The extreme environments of the Underdark test the mettle of the most stoic warriors or learned wizards. This otherworldly setting created some unique challenges for the creative team, who had to incorporate the key theme of madness.

“Our inspiration for the *Rage of Demons* story was *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, so one of the challenges was to bring the Underdark, which has often been portrayed as anything but colorful, to life as a wondrous underworld full of madcap characters,” Perkins says.

The demon lords add a sinister and eldritch evil, which is amplified by the magical nature of the faerzress. This heightens the range of their corruption and makes it powerful enough to drive even the toughest adventurers stark raving mad. The caverns below the surface are suddenly thrown into ultimate chaos, as those who battle the demon lords risk succumbing to the madness they embody. From that moment on, the insanity pervading the Underdark escalates and threatens to shake the Forgotten Realms to its foundations.



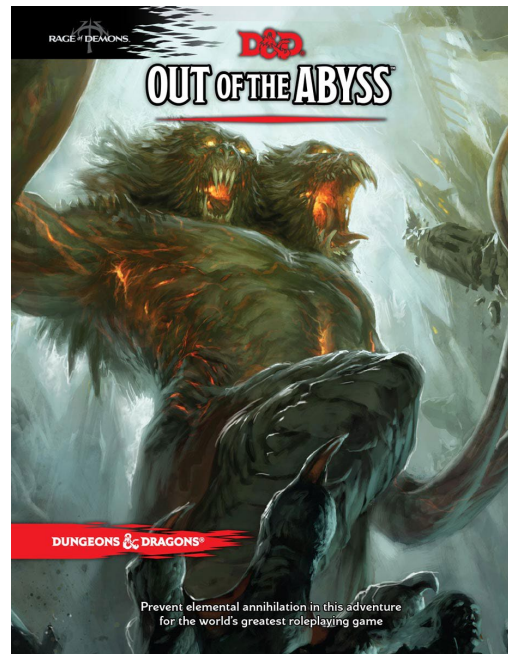
Perkins notes that Lewis Carroll’s characters, from the Madhatter to the Queen of Hearts, exhibit different kinds of insanity. Similarly, D&D has an amazing assortment of demon lords, each one embodying a kind of madness. “By bringing all of the demon lords into the Underdark, we can show different kinds of madness. The faerzress, a magical Underdark radiation, becomes a conduit through which this madness spreads,” says Perkins.

“As the story progresses, we see creatures such as drow, duergar, and myconids become ‘infected’ by madness. The heroes of the story are also susceptible, and there are plenty of opportunities in the story for characters to battle their ‘inner demons.’”

“One of the interesting things that we had to figure out was what color on the spectrum of madness did each demon lord express,” says Lee. “To come into proximity with one of them would affect mortal

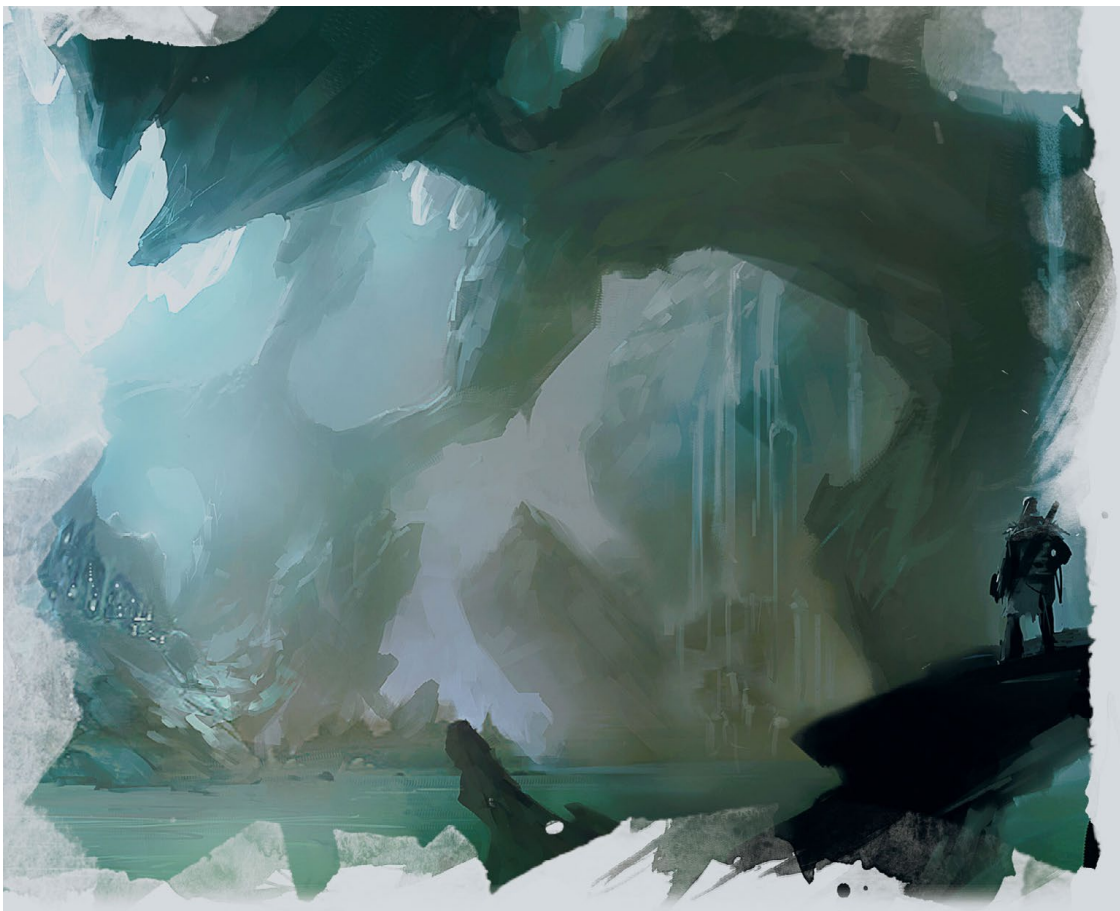
travelers, challenging them to maintain their sanity or devolve into madness.”

Lee describes the Underdark as “not a place for the faint of heart or fragile of mind”, which makes it “a bizarre playground for writers”. It’s also an environment that actively provides great story hooks and interesting threats to thwart characters. “A good story thrives on your characters not getting what they want, being challenged and taken off their path to give twists to the plot. The Underdark is doing all that and more,” he adds.



(Select for details about OUT OF THE ABYSS

However, traditionally the Underdark is portrayed as being silent and pitch black, with Lee describing it as “a giant sensory deprivation tank.” Such a dark and disorienting experience gnaws away at the thin trappings of civilization.



“The first and largest challenge was lighting, as we didn’t want characters wandering around in a pitch black environment,” explains Richard Whitters, Senior Art Director. “I had Sam Burley create some environment concept art, which gave use several creepy or dangerous lighting solutions, including glowing crystals, lava and bioluminescent plants.”

Villains

Demon lords are not creatures that are born, live, and die, they are supernatural forces that have been spawned of pure evil. These incarnations of chaos spread insanity and bloodshed, and the Underdark is their new playground. Their very presence radiates a kind of madness that the faerzress amplifies, warping and transforming the denizens of the Underdark in ways unique to each demon lord. They exploit their surroundings, feasting on flesh and rending the fragile minds of mortals.

READ ABOUT THE DEMON LORDS:



DEMOGORGON

Demogorgon radiates evil and madness to such a degree that his mere presence provokes insanity in sentient creatures. Just looking at his likeness or symbol can cause a subtle whispering within a person's mind, coaxing him or her to slip toward instability and paranoia.

“Demogorgon has always been my favorite and he really makes his presence felt in *Rage of Demons*,” says Perkins. “I like Demogorgon the most,” agrees Whitters. “I had to take great care in the redesign in order to keep the nostalgia aspects, but to also achieve a bit of a nasty facelift – or should that be faces-lift?”

Having tasked his team with creating a scary, creepy *Alice in Wonderland* vibe for *Rage of Demons*, Perkins was keen to populate the Underdark with similarly ‘mad’ characters. Along with Lee, he crafted a host of supporting non-player characters to aid or harangue the adventurers.

“Many of these NPCs remind me of the creatures that Alice encounters in her *Wonderland* adventures. Two of my favorites in the *Rage of Demons* story are Yuk Yuk and Spiderbait, a pair of goblin adrenaline junkies. I’m also a fan of Glabbagool, an intelligent gelatinous cube that might help or hinder the adventurers,” Perkins says.

Heroes

As the races of the Underdark are plunged into turmoil, the surface realms learn that it is only a matter of time before the demon lords turn their dark ambitions upward. The renegade drow Drizzt Do’Urden is sent to investigate. No stranger to the Underdark, he seeks to learn the truth about the demonic threat and put an end to it.

Whitters says he didn’t need to do any new designs for Drizzt when it came to costuming and accouterments, as he wanted to keep the character consistent in the world and maintain his recognizable look. “You don’t change Superman’s costume,” he says by way of explanation.

However, the faerzress takes its toll on anyone entering this environment, including the legendary drow. Although outwardly calm and composed, Drizzt hides a burning rage, a legacy of his dark elf heritage. He keeps a tight rein on this side of himself, which he refers to as “the Hunter,” but it can still overcome him. Will he be strong enough to hold back the madness? It will be up to you to aid in his fight against the demons, before he succumbs to his darker temptations.

Meanwhile, agents of the five factions who escaped the Underdark tell unbelievable tales of horror and madness. The defenders of order and sanity realize that if they do not work together to stop this menace, the demon lords unleashed upon the world will eventually breach the surface, and the fate of all Faerûn will be sealed in darkness and ruin. The factions respond as best they can...

“They send operatives into the Underdark to assess and combat the emerging threat,” Perkins shares. “In *Out of the Abyss*, the TRPG adventure tied to the *Rage of Demons* story season, the five player factions send representatives to meet with King Bruenor Battlehammer of Gauntlgrym. They provide operatives and

resources. The characters get to lead a small army into the Underdark, which is something no D&D adventure has done before.”

READ ABOUT THE FACTIONS:



THE HARPERS

Since ancient days the Harpers have sworn to put an end to unbridled evil in all its forms, especially evil that wields dark magic. They know that the demon lords seek to prey on the weak and corrupt the innocent and they forbid such acts. The Harpers feel that this is the moment they have trained for, and their conscience now calls them to act.

Lee says that for those who know the true depth of the catastrophe, that multiple demon lords are rampaging under their feet, this is the most horrifying reality imaginable. The most pressing problem is to keep the demon lords contained within the Underdark itself. They cannot be allowed to reach the surface.

“So, marshal your forces, close up all the known entrances to the Underdark and clerics, start your praying. The Harpers would summon the most powerful mages to a wizard’s summit, and the other factions would bring forth all the demon-slaying weapons and

enchanted armor they could muster. People on the surface will get unified in a way that they haven't been in some time. It's an 'all hands on deck' moment," Lee says.

Race Relations

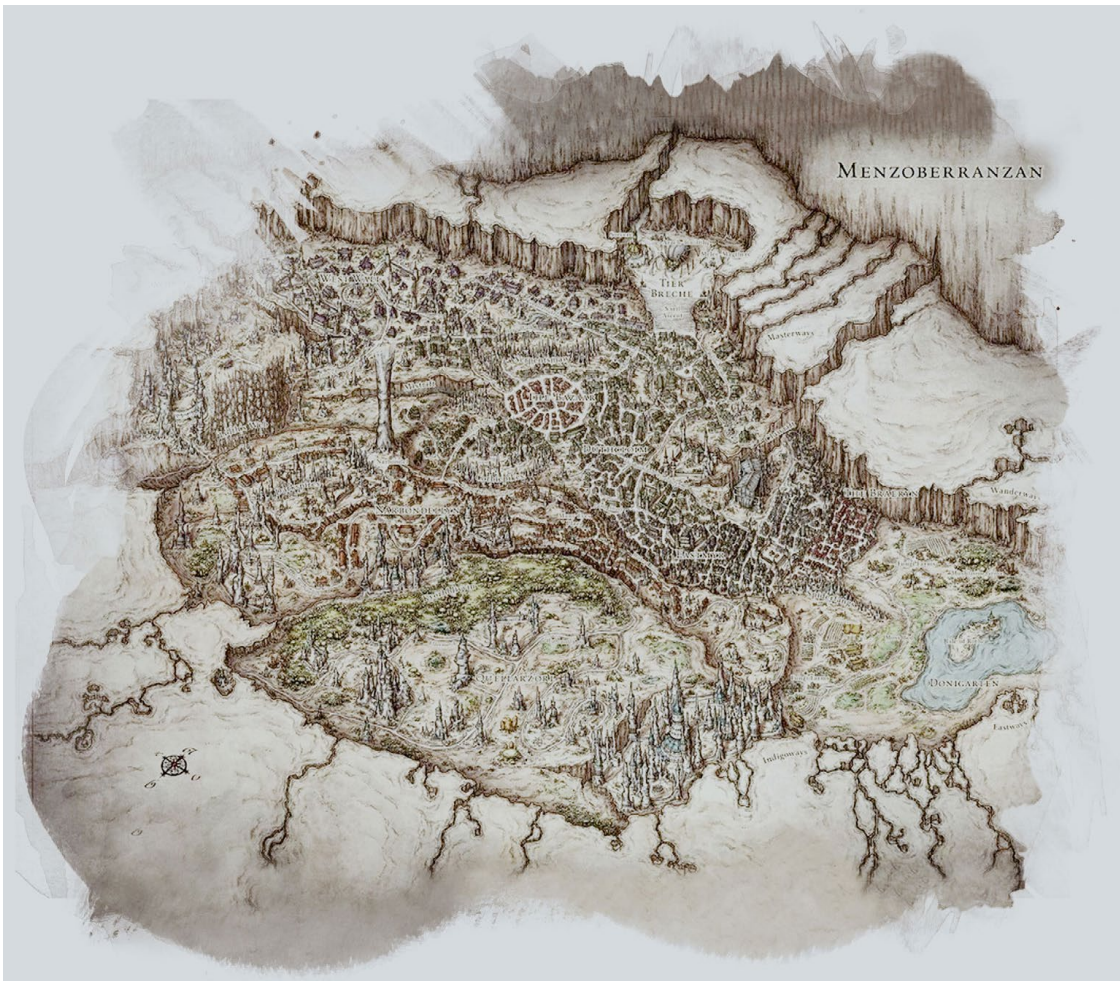
It isn't just members of the surface cities who must react to this devastating threat, leading to some unlikely heroes in *Rage of Demons*. However, Perkins says the existing Underdark races will not react well to the new threat.



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“Underdark cities such as Menzoberranzan and Gracklstugh find themselves ill-equipped to combat the demonic threat. It's up to the heroes to figure out the extent of the problem and find ways to send the demon lords back to the Abyss. They'll find a few allies scattered throughout the Underdark, including some madcap Carrollesque figures.”

The races of the Underdark must react alongside the members of the surface cities to fight for their very survival – or face annihilation at the hands of the demon lords. That includes the deep gnomes (or svirfneblin), who live in the ruins of Blingdenstone following its devastation by the drow. These tough, resourceful people are wary of strangers, but warm up quickly to any who lend a helping hand to rebuild their once-great city.



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The drow themselves reside in the city of Menzoberranzan, divided into a number of noble houses and ruled by priestesses of Lolth. Betrayal and assassination are a way of life here, and a cruel and suspicious nature is a sign of good breeding. Yet they will need to put that aside to combat the demon lords.

Two very different dwarven races hold sway in the Underdark. The Shield Dwarf kingdom of Gauntlgrym has been the stuff of legend for centuries and its massive entrance is sealed with wards against all but dwarves from the line of Delzoun. That keeps out the duergar, a cruel and evil sub-race of dwarves based at Gracklstugh. Their kingdom resembles a hellish foundry and glows with firelight and the ruddy gleam of hot metal at all times, thanks to a red dragon called Themberchaud, who slithers around the city blasting the forge fires to life. In return, the duergar guard Themberchaud's hoard and add to it, occasionally feeding him criminals and ill-tempered slaves.



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Despite being a cavernous place for the most part, there were many structures in the Underdark for Whitters to create. Being underground, they naturally had different needs to similar buildings on Faerûn's surface.

"We created a few sample structures, especially for the Duergar city Gracklstugh," he says. "The first thing I realized is that they don't need pitched rooftops for rain and snow to slide off of. In addition to this, the architecture should reflect the society. The Duergar and the Derro – the latter a largely unwanted underclass in Gracklstugh, which is shunned by the Duergar – live together, but in very different conditions. The Duergar are very utilitarian, while the Derro live in crudely built mud huts."



Perhaps the most dangerous inhabitants of the Underdark are the mind flayers. Found throughout the Underdark, but in particular calling the enclave of Cyrog home, these illithids (as they are also known) pair a humanoid body with an octopus-like head and feed on the brains of sentient creatures.

The Underdark also plays host to intelligent, mobile mushrooms known as myconids and mad,

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unpredictable fishlike beings known as kuo-toa. “I love the kuo-toa, they are the insane, wild, fish-eyed dwellers in the deeps,” Whitters says. “They feel a bit Lovecraftian, but they can add a lot of humor to an adventure in game. I drew several kuo-toa characters based on what Adam and Chris had written. It was a lot of fun giving each one a different expression.

“Anthony Waters also created some excellent designs for the kuo-toa and illithid environments. He really knows how to nail the culture of these odd creatures.”



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Ways to Play Rage of Demons

Rage of Demons, the colossal new Dungeons & Dragons storyline, lands on computer, console, tabletop and hardcover novel. How will you enjoy it?

Whether you prefer consoles, PCs, rolling dice with friends or kicking back with a good book, the all-new Dungeons & Dragons storyline Rage of Demons has plenty to offer. The demon lords have been released from the Abyss, and players and readers must travel down to the Underdark with the iconic hero Drizzt Do’Urden to stop the chaos before it threatens the surface.

The demon lords’ arrival touches every expression of D&D, beginning with a new adventure for the tabletop roleplaying game. Out of the Abyss is suitable for Dungeons & Dragons characters of levels one through fifteen, and brings the world of Underdark firmly into play.



Character creation gets an added dimension, with alternative background features and bonds that are strongly connected with the NPCs, themes, and events of this adventure. For example, players can replace features that would normally be part of a character’s background with options such as Deep Delver and Underdark Experience.

Deep Delver will help them navigate the passageways and tunnels of this underground

(Select to view character backgrounds)

kingdom, allowing them to forage for food and water and sustain up to five other people. Meanwhile, Underdark Experience comes from having spent considerable time in the region learning its ways, familiarizing characters with its various races, civilizations, settlements and travel routes. Alternative bonds also give characters a touchstone to this world – whether that be the time a group of kuo-toa helped them find their way out or when a deep gnome alchemist saved their life.



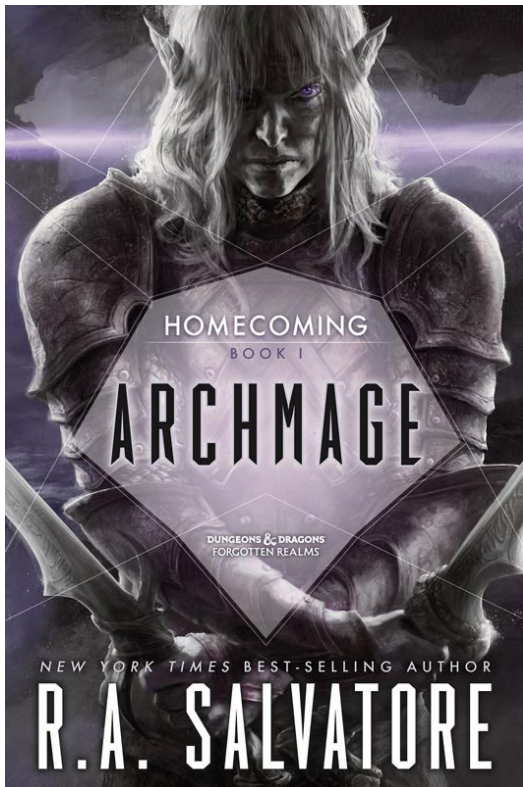
Digital Demons

Dungeons & Dragons videogame fans have even more options than usual to enjoy the Rage of Demons storyline. Sword Coast Legends, the new videogame on the block, isn't about to let a storyline as weighty as Rage of Demons pass it by. The team behind the single and multiplayer collaborative roleplaying videogame is currently hard at work creating additional download content to embed it within their world. The epic campaign that drives Sword Coast Legends' story will force players deep into the Underdark, and the themes of treachery and discord in the Underdark will continue well after launch.

In addition, the sprawling Neverwinter MMORPG will, naturally, play a big role in bringing it to life, as an update takes adventurers to the drow city of Menzoberranzan during its demonic assault, including a unique set of quests written by Drizzt creator R.A. Salvatore. We'll have plenty more on that expansion, which is tentatively titled Neverwinter: Underdark, next issue.

Novel Experience

Yet to really get into the mind of legendary adventurer Drizzt, fans will have to check out Archmage, the new novel by R.A. Salvatore. The first book in the Homecoming saga, Archmage has everything Drizzt's fans crave: action, adventure, and characters that resonate with equal measures of warrior spirit and deep compassion.



(Select to download chapter 1)

due for release on PC and Xbox late 2015; Archmage by R.A. Salvatore is released in hardcover on September 1, 2015.

The story takes place as a new day dawns on a victorious Mithral Hall. Yet no matter how bright things seem on the surface, Drizzt and his companions know that what lurks just under their feet remains steeped in evil and charged with unimaginable power. The dark elves of Menzoberranzan, it seems, aren't done with Drizzt just yet. And neither are you: download Archmage chapter one using the link on this page.

Out of the Abyss is released on September 15, 2015; Sword Coast Legends is due for release on PC, Mac and Linux on September 29, 2015; Neverwinter: Underdark is

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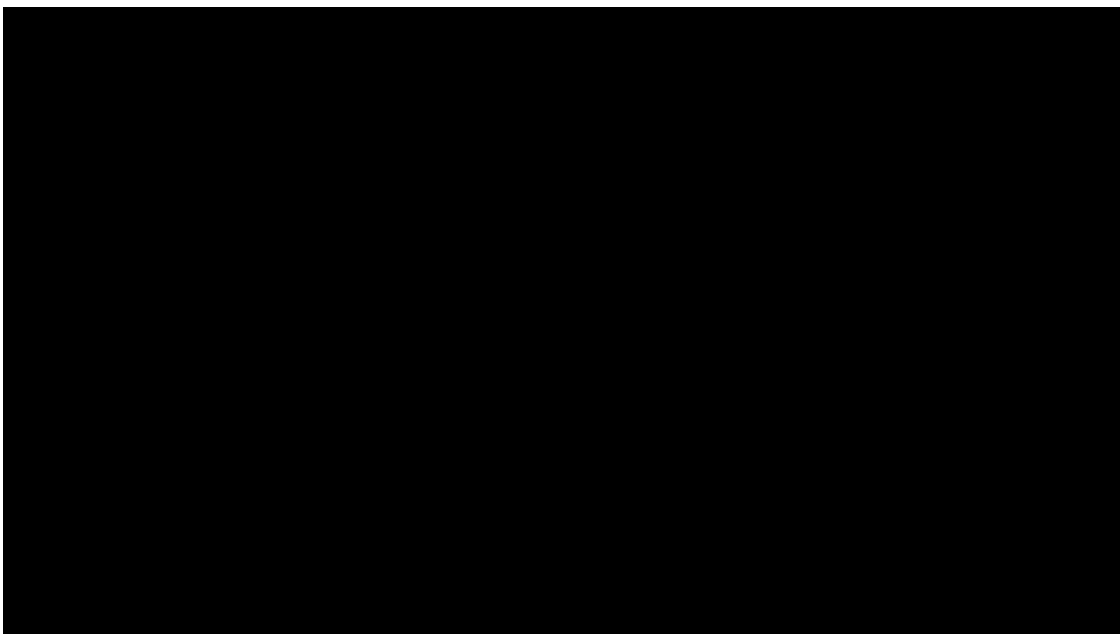
Streaming Highlights

Including pro tips for DMs, Acquisitions Inc.'s latest maddening endeavor, a rundown of the top ten D&D monsters, all the action from Critical Role's live game and a look back at D&D Extra Life 2014.



ACQUISITIONS INC.

The team from Acquisitions Inc. is at it again, as they prepare to take the stage at PAX once more. If you thought those demon lords were already angry, any meeting with this bunch of wisecracking adventurers is guaranteed to raise them to a whole new level of rage.



BE A BETTER DUNGEON MASTER

This new educational series from DawnforgedCast is designed to make you a better DM. Following in the footsteps of the Better Player series, these short tutorials are designed to aid current and aspiring GMs looking to improve their game, not just in terms of adventure content but on the actual management of the table itself.

The series kicks off with a look at managing the spotlight, to make sure everyone gets a say at your table, not just the spotlight hogs. Follow up advice takes in the benefits of providing a variety of encounters and Rule 0, which states that the DM always has final say (not to be confused with the DM is always right).

TOP TEN MONSTERS

Everyone has their favorites when it comes to monsters. Esper the Bard counts down his list of the unforgettable creatures he loves to run as a DM, thanks to their great mechanics and themes. Do you agree with his picks?

CRITICAL ROLE

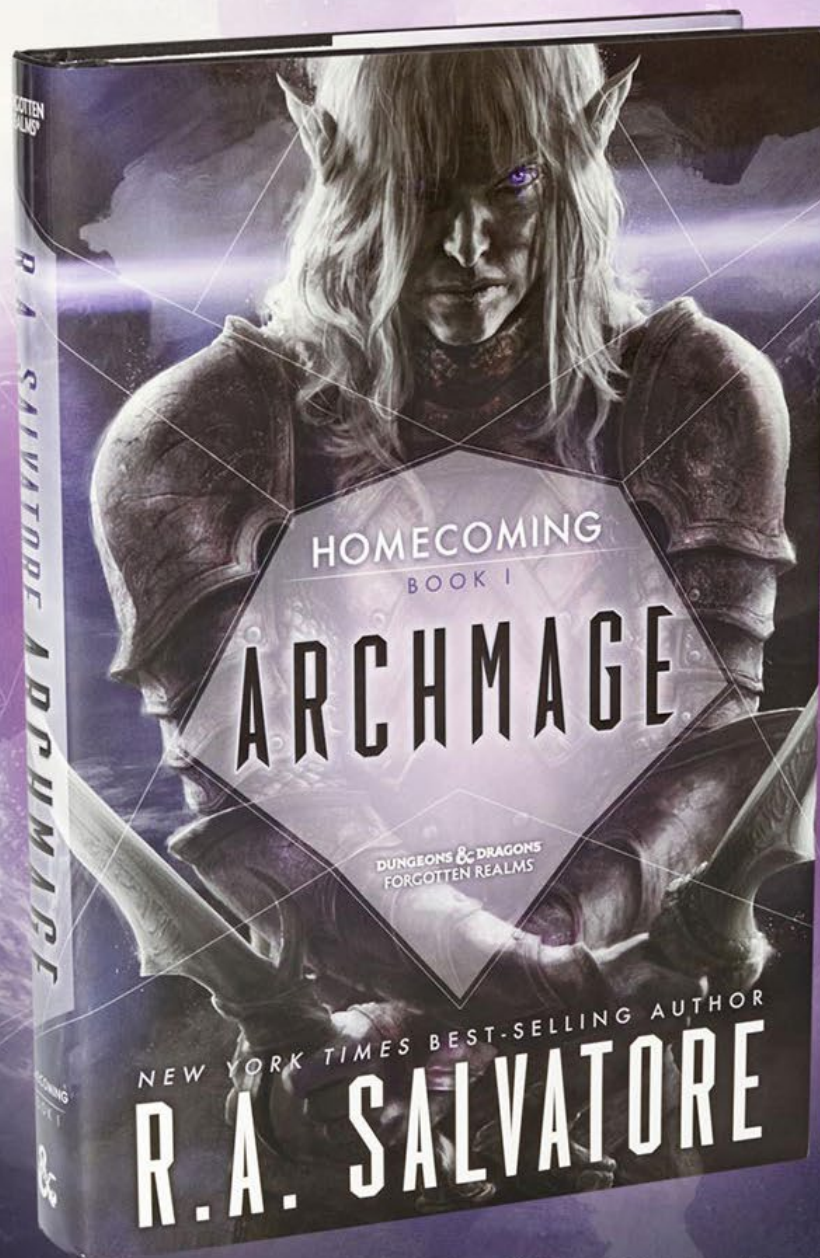
Join Dungeon Master Matthew Mercer as he and a bunch of other voice actors play through their epic D&D campaign. Their story begins as a band of adventurers known as Vox Machina arrives at the

cavernous underground city of Kraghammer. What are the unnatural creatures that have plagued the dwarven mines in recent months?



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WHAT READERS ARE SAYING...



"One of the best from Salvatore yet."

"Hang on for a trip that can only be experienced in a Drizzt book."

"...a strong beginning to the Homecoming series, and I look forward to the next installments!"

"A fun read with battles and combat galore..."

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SAMPLE CHAPTER



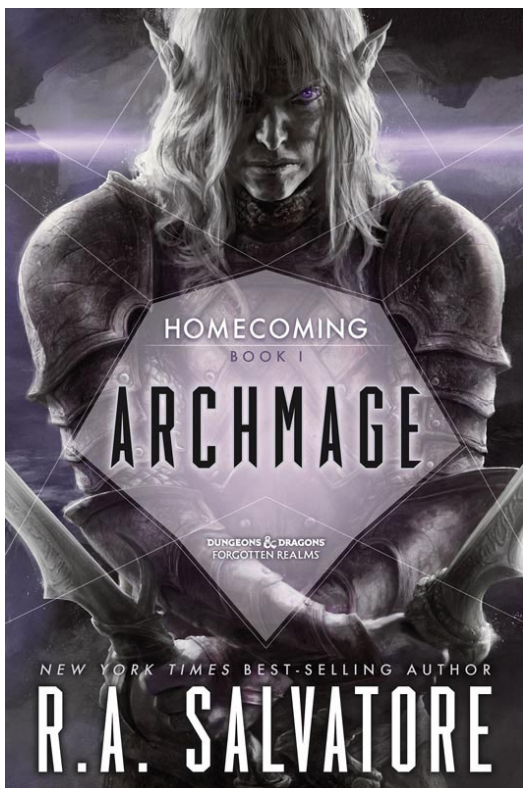
Interview: RA Salvatore

Fantasy author The creator of Drizzt Do'Urden has been heavily involved in the upcoming Rage of Demons storyline. Dragon+ spoke to him about his past, present and future...

When we speak to R.A. Salvatore he's sitting in Castle Greyhawk, which is the name of a meeting room at Wizards of the Coast, rather than an actual castle. His journey to this fictional structure has, perhaps fittingly for a quest to a castle, been long, first getting involved with D&D thanks to a speculative book written in the early '80s. Having sent it to a number of publishers, he carried on honing and rewriting his words, despite the standard rejection notices. Looking at the writer's market to see which publishers were accepting manuscripts, he singled out TSR.

“Their book program was really ramping up because of *Dragonlance*, which was very, very hot in the late '80s. So I sent my book in and they called me back and said, ‘We really like this but we don't have any room in our schedule for independent novels, could you possibly set this in the Forgotten Realms?’ So I asked, what's the Forgotten Realms? It wasn't out yet. They only had one book printed and that was Doug Niles' *Darkwalker on Moonshae*.

“However, I couldn't set that book in the realms. It wouldn't have made any sense, because it started in our world and went to a future world and the Forgotten Realms isn't connected to our world like



(Select to download chapter 1)

that. So they said, ‘We really like your writing, would you like to audition? We need an author to do the second book.’ So I did an outline and a sample chapter and won the second book, which was *The Crystal Shard*. I remember I got the call on July 11th in 1987 saying, ‘Congratulations, you’re going to be an author.’ That was really cool. Of course, the bad news was they needed the book October 1st, so it was a crazy

couple of months.”

That must have been a great call to get, despite the burden of work... At the time I was working a full-time job an hour from home, so I was gone ten-and-a-half hours a day. I had a three-year-old, a two-year-old and my wife was seven months pregnant. I had to get a new apartment, because the one we had was suddenly too small and a new car because you can’t put three car seats in the back of a Mustang GT. So I said, ‘No problem!’ and wrote the book. When you want something badly enough and the opportunity presents itself, you’ll find a way.

You came to fantasy through Tolkien. Were you drawn to that or was it recommended to you?

My sister gave me a copy of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* for Christmas in 1977. I was a freshman at college and a couple of months later New England got buried by a blizzard, so I was trapped at my mother’s house for a week. School was cancelled, college was cancelled, but I wasn’t trapped at the house. I went away to Middle-earth. An amazing thing happened: I remember reading the wonderful introduction to that, which was done by Peter S. Beagle, and I started to remember all the reasons why I used to read so much when I was a kid and I had lost that through school. Then I read *The Hobbit* and from word one it got me and my mind went away on this adventure – I was in Middle-earth. And it was an amazing experience. I went back to school and changed my major from math/computer science to communications media, because all of my electives then became literature courses. I was reading everything I could get my hands on – Chaucer, Shakespeare, anything. Of all the courses I was taking, Joyce was my favourite.

But I never gave up on fantasy because Tolkien had done that to me, he’d brought me back. So I

read everything out there and there really wasn't that much at that time; the Shannara books by Terry Brooks, and the Stephen Donaldson Lord Foul's Bane books, and Michael Moorcock. But I ran out of books to read and so I wrote my own. And that's how I got into the business.

Is it true you previously worked as a bouncer?

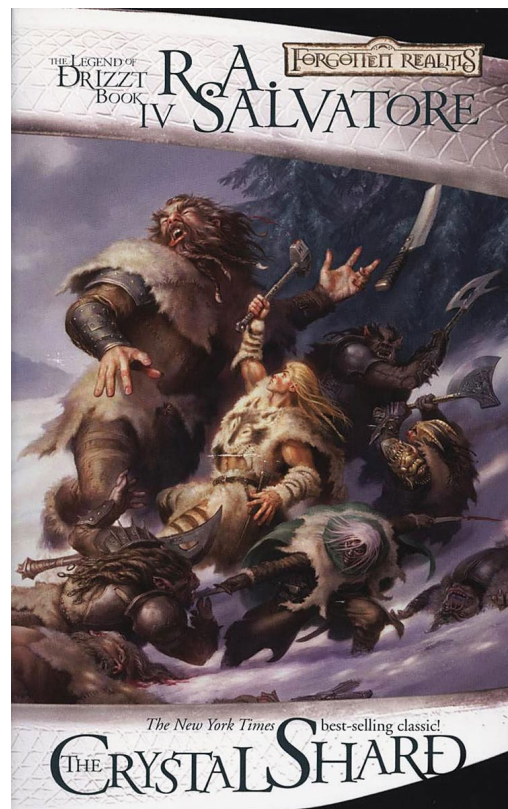
I paid my way through college as a bouncer. It was funny because I was at San Diego Comic-Con a few years ago and David Gemmell was there and I love his books, and I'd never met him before. So we got to talking about our histories and we had done all of the same jobs: he was a mailman, I was a mailman; he was a bouncer, I was a bouncer, at the same times in our lives. He was a few years older than me but it was very strange watching the progression.

Do you still call upon that experience to write your fight scenes? Yes, but it's not so much the fights I was in as a bouncer, it's just the way I approach my life. I love watching sports and the way the human body moves. To me, it's poetry. It's all about balance. I grew up watching the Ali/Frazier fights and I was a big hockey fan and played hockey, as well as being a bouncer and a boxer in high school. But just watching athletes and how they perform and the things they can do with their bodies has always fascinated me and when I'm doing a fight scene I always come back to that, to the balance. Where's his feet? That's all that matters. If his feet are in the right place, he's OK. If they're not, he's in trouble.

What's your writing process like?

It's changed a lot over the years. At first I was writing while I was at work and if I had ten minutes I would jot down some notes for a paragraph and come home and form the paragraph. When the kids were little and I was now a fulltime writer I would write with my two-year-old daughter on my lap. It then became very routine because the kids were going to school. I would get up in the morning and get the kids off to school and I knew I had X number of hours before the first one came home.

Now that the kids are grown and out of the house it's gone back to being more freeform. I'll have the laptop with me and I'll be watching a baseball game and I'll write when the other team is batting. Or I'll be watching a TV show and I hate commercials so as soon as they come on I write. Or I'll go up in my office and put music on and just go away for two hours. Or I'm on a plane and I put my headphones on and try and forget I'm on this little flying thing



30,000 feet off the ground and I go away to the world and write.

At this point in time I don't have a lot of structure to it anymore, although the way I compose a book is still the same. But the way I go about finding the time to compose the book is very loose now.

You created the character Drizzt Do'Urden. Did you have an inkling of how popular he would be with readers? Or was that a really nice surprise?

A little bit of both. This was back in '87 when they wanted a sample chapter and I had actually used a character from Doug Niles' book which was the only printed material they had on the Realms, *Darkwalker on Moonshae*. Doug's character introduced the hero of my book, Wulfgar, and then that character was going to go off-screen because I didn't want to use other people's characters. Of course, they said, 'We don't want you on the Moonshae Isles.' I was like, 'Do you want me in the water?' Because the book only had the isles. They said 'No, no, no' and they sent me the maps of the Realms and I realized we're thousands of miles away from there.



I then got this phone call at work and it was Mary Kirchoff – she was the editor who pulled me out of the slush pile – saying I needed a sidekick for Wulfgar because you can't use Daryth. And I said, 'I didn't want to use Daryth, I never did. I'll come up with something and I'll call you next week.' She says, 'No I need it now.' I was at work and it was almost lunchtime so I thought I wouldn't take lunch, I'd come up with a character and I'd call her right after. She says, 'You don't understand, I'm late for a meeting with the sales force and I need to sell them on your book. I need a sidekick for Wulfgar.' And off the top of my head I said a Dark Elf. I don't know how or why because it's nobody I've played in a game and I don't know where it came from.

There's a long pause and she says, 'Like a drow?' and I say, 'Yeah, like a drow. A drow ranger – that'll be cool, nobody's done that

before.’ She’s like, ‘There’s probably a reason nobody’s done that...’ and I’m trying to convince her this will be cool. It just happened. She said, ‘Ok, he’s a sidekick and I’m late for a meeting and I’ll let you get away with it. Well, what’s his name?’ And I said, ‘Drizzt Do’Urden of D’aermon N’a’chezbaernon, the Ninth House of Menzoberranzan.’ She said, ‘What?’ and I said, ‘I have no idea.’ And I didn’t! She said, ‘Can you spell it?’ and I said ‘No.’ So it just happened and I didn’t think anything of it, it’s a sidekick character. Then I started writing the book and on page two I knew it was his book, I knew it wasn’t Wulfgar’s. And that was quite an experience, it really took my breath away when I realised just how much this character had begun to resonate with me.

And then I remember when I was writing the third book, *The Halfling’s Gem*, and they told me to tie everything up because people were sick of these characters. Then they got overwhelmed with fan mail, because people wanted to know where the Dark Elf came from. So they told me to tie it up in 1989 and here we are in 2015 writing books. It completely caught me by surprise and how much I cared about the character caught me by surprise as well.

And Drizzt now features when the Forgotten Realms appears in other formats...

I remember I was playing Baldur’s Gate and I saw Drizzt and I was as surprised as anyone. So of course, I tried to kill him and take his stuff and he wiped out my party. But I’ve been working with some of the licensees to do certain things.

Tell me about your new novel, Archmage?

It’s going to kick off the big *Rage of Demons* storyline and it’s basically when the archmage Gromph Baenre reaches a little too deep and does something really bad. There’s a whole lot of side stories going on – I’ve got the Dwarves trying to retake Gauntlgrym from House Xorlarrin of the drow – but at the top level it is really, ‘What’s this button do?’ And he shouldn’t have pushed the button, but he did.

This leads in as the first book of the Homecoming trilogy; the second book I’m working on right now and that’ll be out sometime in spring 2016. But really this whole trilogy is about Drizzt coming to terms with the second life of his companions and what that means. He’s been doing everything he’s needed to do, but is now taking a step back from that life and asking himself, ‘What do I want to do? What life do I want to have with Catti-brie this time around?’ So there’s a lot of introspection going on, there’s a lot of joy and it’s surrounded by other chaos. It’s challenging and it’s a lot of fun, but that’s usually when I know I’m doing good work.

Is there any aspect of the Realms that you’ve wanted to write about but haven’t covered yet?

Plenty. There are still so many aspects of the Realms that I would like to explore. I wanted to write a trilogy of books set back in Myth Drannor. I wrote a short story, and then that never happened. Cadderly was actually going to use his magic to commune with the cat and serve as the voice of the cat, as Guenhwyvar told Drizzt her

earliest recollections when she was created by the dark elf Triel Baenre back in Myth Drannor. Because I really love Myth Drannor – it's pure Realms and pure fantasy.

I also really wanted to do a lot more with the Bloodstone lands and I've been there a few times. I actually wrote the source book for the Bloodstone lands for D&D second edition. I love that area. It was one of the places I wanted to set *The Crystal Shard* because the glacier is actually in the Bloodstone Lands. But that didn't happen. So I've been able to go there a few times but I've never been able to explore it in the way that I've wanted to.

Archmage, Homecoming, Book I by R.A. Salvatore is released on September 1st, 2015.

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Unwrapping Sword Coast Legends

The team behind the upcoming CRPG finally lifts the lid on its epic world and its character-building features...

“Heading into E3, it was so hectic getting the build together; it was a nightmare. I thought, ‘This build is never going to be playable,’” says Tim Schwalk, Design Director at game developer n-Space. “Then a few days later we’re showing it off and it shows so well.”

He’s talking about *Sword Coast Legends*, the new collaborative RPG that sees digital Dungeon Masters putting teams of players through their paces, just like a tabletop roleplaying game. While the initial trailers have been well received, the chance to show it off to journalists at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (better known as E3) was the true test of the game’s progress. And it didn’t disappoint.

Among the awards it scooped were:

- ‘Best RPG of E3’ (Game Critic Awards)
- ‘Best RPG’ (MMORPG.com)
- ‘Best Mac Game of E3’ (TechnologyTell)
- ‘Best Game We Played At E3’ (PCGamesN)
- ‘Top 10 PC Games’ (PC World)
- ‘Editor’s Choice’ (The Nerdist)
- the ‘We Love It’ award (The Escapist)
- ‘Best in Show’ nominations from both IGN and Game Informer.

With the game now fully revealed, here are ten things you need to know about *Sword Coast Legends*...

1) NPC Creation



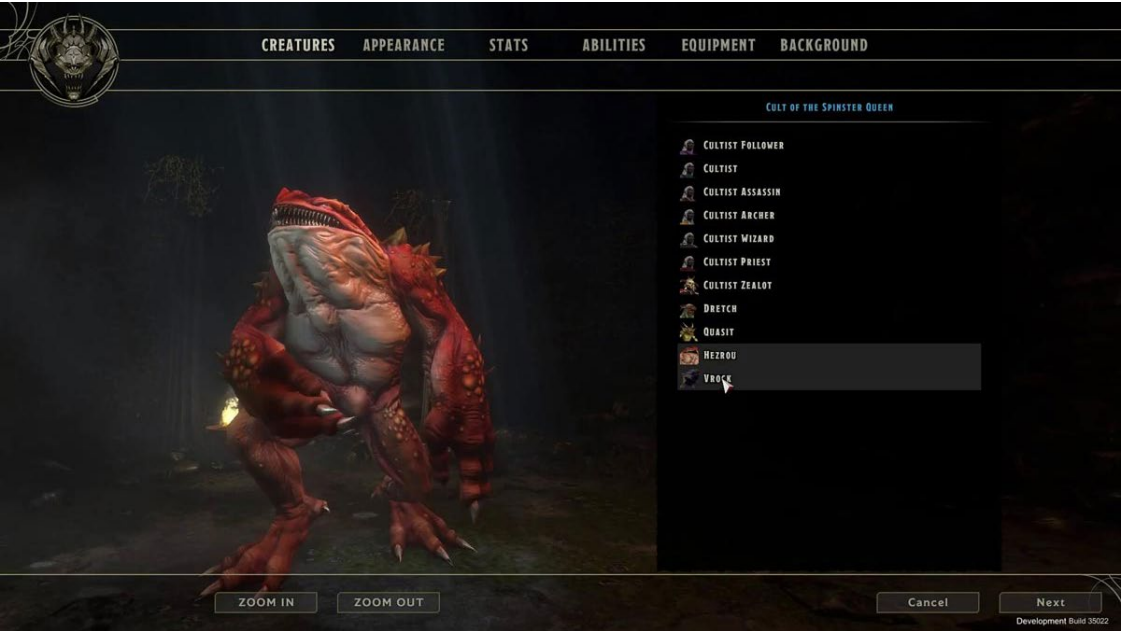
Click on Creatures, New Character and you can use an editor to create an NPC; choosing options such as race, class, gender, weaponry and name. That NPC can then be placed in a scene and offer a mission to the players. A quest can then be assigned when the party talks to the NPC or when a specific action occurs.

2) Location Work



Scenes can be created using different tile sets. For example, in a quest to search for a missing member of your order, who was last seen in the Lost Peaks, a Dungeon Master could use the Mountain tile set. That location can be linked to the quest, so it opens up on the player's map when they accept it. Dungeon Masters can then change the weather (from overcast to lightning storm), place baddies on the map, and make it nighttime to be extra spooky.

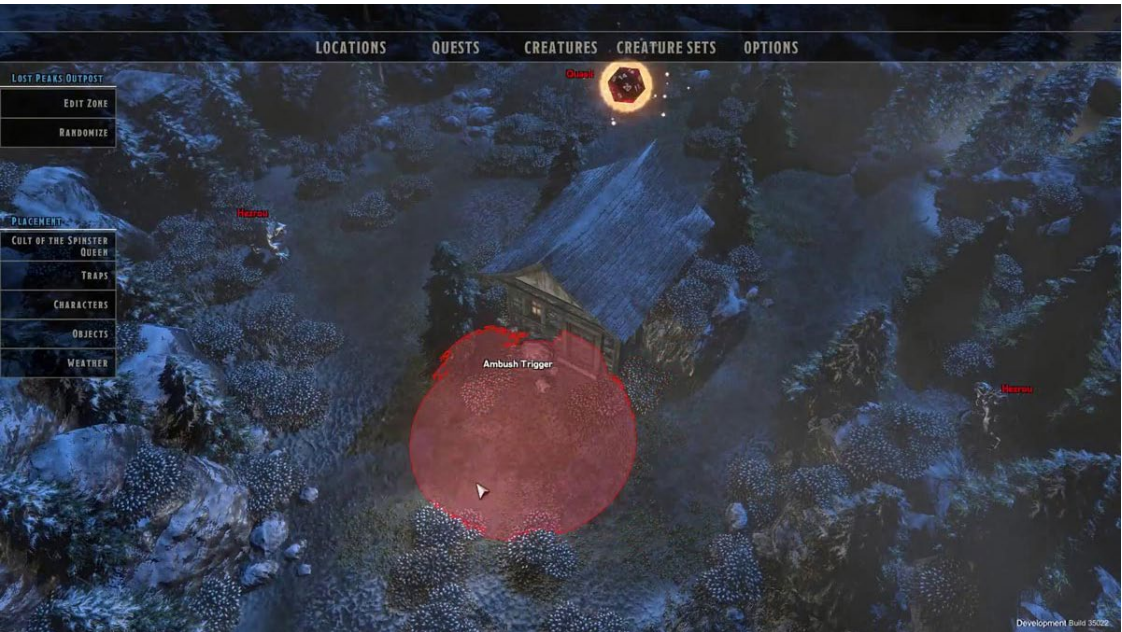
3) Unique Adversaries



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Creatures can be edited in the same way other NPCs can, allowing you to modify everything from their abilities, stats, and spells to their equipment and the color of their robes. In one custom creature set shown off by n-Space, Schwalk took inspiration from the *Rage of Demons* storyline and created his own group of cultists, who worship a unique deity. There’s also an option to increase the stats for major bad guys and offset their levels, having them come in two levels higher than the party, for example.

4) Encounters



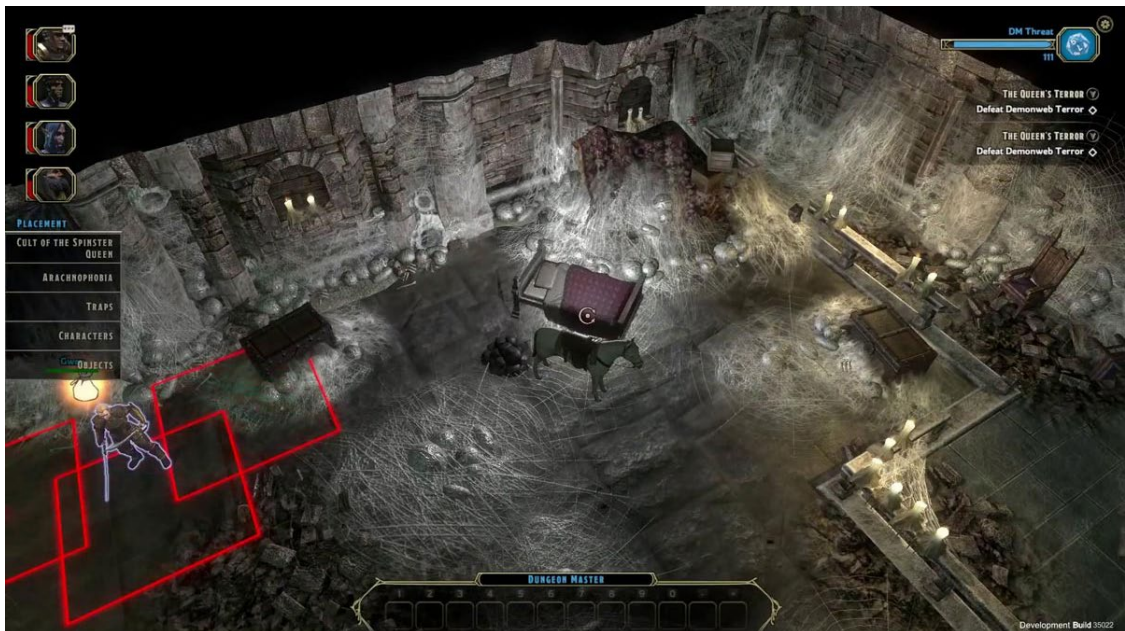
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These can be placed on the map to take effect when the party triggers them. So the players may be heading for a lodge in the woods, but when they arrive, their appearance sets off an ambush, an event that has been rated hard to provide a real challenge.

5) Item Generation



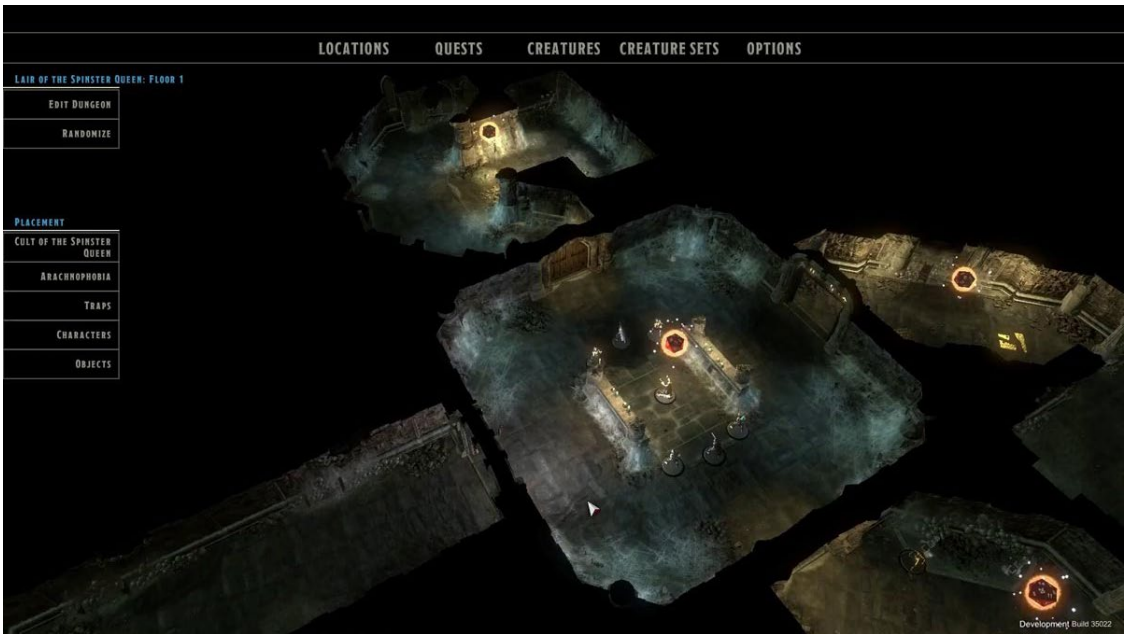
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Every environment can be filled with props, which have been chosen from a list of hundreds of options (including a selection of different corpses, with optional blood splatter). Each item can be given a custom description and they may kick off quests or even trigger effects – such as opening another location far across the Sword Coast. Items can even be trapped to give the players an added surprise.

6) Dungeon Crawls



(Select to view)

Dungeons can quickly be created from scratch. The Dungeon Master can change the description, title, icon, size, amount of floors and complexity, as well as the tile and creature sets. Once the dungeon has been created, it can be customized further. Naturally, there's the opportunity to place traps. Areas can also be hidden using secret doors and chests can be made more difficult to find, so players have to search a room to uncover them. The default encounters can also be edited for difficulty and type, or replaced completely with brand new encounters. Every surface area can also be fully customized, so an encounter could be inspired by your favorite module, a homebrew campaign or a story you've read.

7) The Wisp



When the DM moves his cursor over a screen, it appears as a magical wisp on the players' screen. *Sword Coast Legends* is a collaborative game, much like the D&D tabletop roleplaying game, so it doesn't always mean the DM is up to no good, but it allows the players to know that their influence is nearby.

8) Threat Assessment



(Select to view)

The Dungeon Master can change an encounter as it is happening, up to a point (for example, he or she can't drop a trap directly onto a player). Everything that challenges the players costs a portion of the DM Threat Meter, which is refreshed when the team kills enemies and generally succeeds. If one of the party dies, the DM loses a big chunk of his threat. It also costs a lot of the DM Threat Meter to possess an enemy, which lets the Dungeon Master take on the party directly.

9) Turn Based



(Select to view)

Sword Coast Legends also features a single-player campaign. Combat happens in real time in this mode, but players who prefer turn-based combat can choose to pause and queue up attacks. However, pause-and-play isn't available in the multiplayer mode to help maintain the tension for both Dungeon Masters and players.

10) Co-op Mode



(Select to view)

While playing through the Sword Coast Legends single-player story, you can easily swap out companions with your friends, who can play along with you in real time, or you can bring your own adventurer into their story to help them out on a challenging quest!

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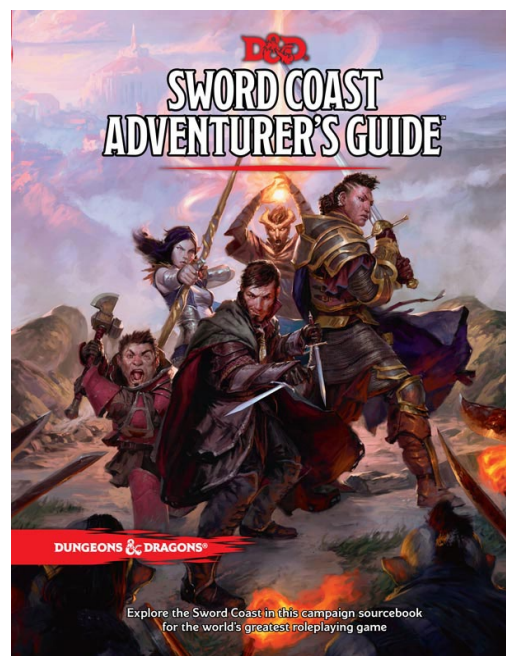


Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide

Lead Designer of Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide, Steve Kenson, introduces a major new resource for players and Dungeon Masters adventuring on the Sword Coast.

Welcome to the realms! The Forgotten Realms has been home to Dungeons & Dragons stories and adventures for decades. First came Ed Greenwood's tales of swords and sorcery, then came his D&D campaign, where the Realms grew and flourished. Ed shared glimpses of the Realms in the pages of *Dragon* magazine – and did the same again recently in *Dragon+* (read our exclusive interview in issue 2).

When TSR sought a new campaign world to expand the D&D multiverse, it chose the Realms, and the gates were flung wide for players and Dungeon Masters all over the world to come to Faerûn and create their own tales of heroism and adventure. A year later, author R.A. Salvatore introduced readers to drow ranger Drizzt Do'Urden in his first novel, *The Crystal Shard*, sealing the Underdark as an essential part of this world (see [page 10](#) for more



on Drizzt).

([Select to learn more](#))

Now the *Sword Coast*

Adventurer's Guide adds further detail to the glimpses of the Realms found in the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*. This comprehensive look at the continent of Faerûn and the world of Toril in general—and the Sword Coast and the North regions in particular—is invaluable when it comes to creating your own heroes and their stories in the Realms.

The *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide* is packed full of information about the history, lands, and peoples of Faerûn, of the great cities of the Sword Coast and the North, of the gods and powers of their people, and of the factions and forces that support and threaten them. Players and Dungeon Masters will also learn more about how the various D&D races and classes from the *Player's Handbook* fit specifically into the Realms and this region, and find backgrounds that link characters to the great places, people, and events of the Realms.

What was it like retelling the history of the Forgotten Realms and the Sword Coast?



Steve Kenson

To quote Wil Wheaton as Wesley Crusher “strange, but also good!” Like revisiting old friends and places I had been in my youth, which is essentially the case, since I was introduced to the Forgotten Realms in high school. It was certainly a challenge for our creative team to take a world with untold thousands of years of history (to say nothing of nearly thirty years of real-world publications) and sum up even a

portion of it, but that is the goal of the *Sword Coast Adventurers Guide* and I think we achieved it.

What maps will be available in the *Sword Coast Adventurers Guide*? We took what I think is an interesting direction with the maps in the book, as most of them are produced as the sort of maps inhabitants in the Realms would make and use themselves, rather than omniscient ‘game’ maps. So they help to transport you into the setting as its people see it and they’re suitable for the players, as they don’t contain any ‘secret’ information. They’re exactly the sort of maps adventurers might have in their packs, or acquire from a map-maker in one of the larger cities.



(Select to view)

There's an overview map of northern Faerûn and a map of the Sword Coast and the North region, as well as maps of Baldur's Gate, Neverwinter, Waterdeep, and Luskan. We also use detail maps from the Sword Coast overview map to highlight particular areas when and where they are discussed, showing those places in context.

What challenges did you face in creating class-race-background options that are meant to be tied to the Realms?

Primarily we had to balance rooting those options strongly in the Realms – and the Sword Coast, in particular – while also making them as broadly useful to D&D players as possible. Too much one way and you lose the unique character and style of the Realms that make it such an appealing setting; too much the other and the *Adventurer's Guide* would only be useful to those looking to adventure in the Realms. I think we struck a good balance, such that you'll find many Realms-specific options, like the Uthgardt barbarians, elven bladesingers, Purple Dragon Knights, and the like, while also having options like new totems, sub-classes, and a new warlock patron (the Undying) you can use in any campaign.



Do you have a favorite background in the book?

[There's one] that comes with the character being the heir to something of value, and the accompanying table that provides inspiration as to what it might be. It's a classic fantasy background that suits the Realms well: a hero who has some mysterious item,

document, bit of lore, or even a tattoo or unusual scar, which turns out to be the key to a greater story.

That said, all the backgrounds in the Guide help to root new characters strongly in the Realms and the Sword Coast and offer plenty of interesting character hooks and new background features.

What are your favorite character options in the book?

How to choose! I like the half-elf and tiefling variant options, which pack a lot into a small space in terms of customizing those races for the Realms to reflect their unique heritage. I'm a big fan of the Oath of the Crown option for paladins—owing allegiance to the ideals of civilization and service to a sovereign, nation, or deity of law and rulership, because it's perfect for chivalrous champions and battlefield leaders. The Undying warlock patron makes for some tough warlocks and also manages to slip in some fun multiversal references.



Having all the information on the many gods of the Forgotten Realms in one place is a great resource. What do you think will excite fans the most?

I think the most exciting thing can be summed up as “they’re back!” Gods once thought dead and gone are worshipped once more, and long-lost sects and cults have returned. The gods are ‘quiet’ after the Sundering, communicating with the faithful more through signs and portents, so there’s more room for interpretation and, essentially, faith amongst their followers. The Guide offers a great overview of how religion is practiced in the Realms, and a tremendous wealth of choices for patron deities to inspire and guide heroes, as well as evil gods whose worshippers threaten the civilized world.

Who is the Open Lord of Waterdeep?

During the *Tyranny of Dragons* storyline, Dagult Neverember was deposed as the Open Lord of Waterdeep and replaced by Laeral Silverhand. Neverember is still a force to be reckoned with in Neverwinter, however, and has done a great deal to rebuild and restore it. Naturally, there's a lot of speculation in Waterdeep about the return of Laeral, who was long thought dead, and the new Open Lord is clearly keeping her secrets close to her chest.



How is the book useful to players?

The *Sword Coast Adventurers Guide* provides players new to the Realms with an overview of all the essential information about the setting and the region, from history to culture, geography, and religion, so they can get a feel for the world. It provides long-time fans of the Realms a more detailed look at the current state of the world and many favorite and familiar places. Both kinds of players will find chapters on the race, class, and background options of the Sword Coast they can use to create their characters, grounding them in the Realms in conjunction with the setting detail in earlier chapters.

As a Dungeon Master, how would you expect to utilize this book for your Forgotten Realms campaign?

Like other Forgotten Realms books, the *Sword Coast Adventurers Guide* is a portal for the imagination. The overview of the Sword Coast and the North – from the islands of the West to the High Forest and Serpent Hills of the East, from frigid Icewind Dale in the north to legendary Candlekeep to the south – is chock-full of ideas to inspire exploration, travel, and adventure, told in the worlds of travellers who have visited those places. Dungeon Masters can spend whole campaigns teasing out the various ideas in this book and, best of all,

it is all material suitable for players to read to help fire their imaginations, not just about the characters they will create, but the places they may want them to see and the challenges they want them to take on. As a Dungeon Master, I'd be inclined to let my players have some time to read and absorb what they find in the Guide and then ask them: "So, where do you want to go...?"

The Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide is released on November 3 2015.



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Community: Underdark Spell Components

There's no convenience store selling crucial spell components when your back's against the rock face in the Underdark. Could naturally occurring materials stand in for their above-ground counterparts?



On a good day, the Underdark is a labyrinth of mystery, madness, and macabre creatures. Few dare enter and even fewer return. Casting spells in the Underdark is also no easy feat and preparation is, of course, key.

Yet even the best adventurers sometimes forget to stock up on the essentials, and it's no good rummaging through your bag of holding arguing over who was supposed to pick up the powdered opal and that live caterpillar as a horde of illithids bear down on you.

What if you could get around this problem using alternate material spell components that are plentiful in the Underdark? We asked you to swap an item not readily available in this harsh environment with one that would be. Here are our favorites...

“Spell name: Fly.

Current material component: A wing feather from any bird.

Alternative Underdark



component: Bones from a bat's wing."

JOHN E.



"Spell name: Barkskin.

Current material component: A handful of oak bark.

Alternative Underdark component: A handful of beetle carapace."

JASON F.



"The Spell name: Disintegrate.

Current material component: a loadstone and a pinch of dust.

Alternative Underdark component: Mummified Beholder stalk."

ALLEN T.



"Spell name: Pass Without Trace.

Current material component: Ashes from a burned leaf of mistletoe and a sprig of spruce.

Alternative Underdark component: Dust from a cave moth's wing."

TREVOR S.

"Spell name: Hunger of Hadar.



Current material component: A pickled octopus tentacle.

Alternative Underdark component: Stewed Darkmantle tentacle.”

GLORIMAR



“Spell name: Detect Poison and Disease.

Current material component: A yew leaf.

Alternative Underdark component: Mycena chlorophos (a.k.a. “glowing mushrooms”).”

MIKE J.



“Spell name: Flame Blade.

Current material component: Leaf of sumac.

Alternative Underdark component: Luminescent moss.”

BEN F.



“Spell name: Hex.

Current material component: The petrified eye of a newt.

Alternative Underdark component: Pickled rat tail.”

ELIJAH S.

“Spell name: Rope Trick.



Current material component: A powdered corn extract.

Alternative Underdark component: The spinneret of a still-living spider.”

TREVOR M.



“Spell name: Reverse Gravity.

Current material component: A lodestone and iron filings.

Alternative Underdark component: Crystal flowers of rich iron content and a spiderstone.”

ADAM B.



“Spell name: Confusion.

Current material component: Three nutshells.

Alternative Underdark component: A living mind flayer tadpole.”

SIMON M.

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D&D Extra Life Team Returns

The Dungeons & Dragons team is leveling up its game this year for Extra Life.



Dungeons & Dragons is joining Magic: The Gathering in the first annual **Extra Life Tabletop Weekend** this year with support from partners Fantasy Grounds, WizKids Games, Gale Force 9, and DriveThruRPG.

What's Our Goal?

Last year, the team played D&D for twenty-five hours straight and raised over \$85,000 for the kids at Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. This year, our goal is \$100,000, and we're almost doubling the length of the game. That's right—**forty-eight hours of D&D!** In the interest of keeping our intrepid Dungeon Master and players sane, though, we'll be sharing the load with a rotation of twelve DMs and dozens of players throughout the event. Each DM will tailor his or her own adventure to fit into a larger, connected campaign, and we'll be streaming the whole thing, assuming rust monsters don't devour the routers.

(Also, we kind of want to beat the Magic team.)

When Can I Watch?

Extra Life Tabletop Weekend is October 2 – 4. The forty-eight-hour D&D game will be broadcast on [twitch.tv/wotc_dnd](https://www.twitch.tv/wotc_dnd) starting on Friday, October 2, at 8 PM Pacific and running until Sunday, October 4, 8 PM Pacific. The full schedule of DMs and players will be posted in a future article.

It's never too early to support the cause. You can visit the [D&D team page](#) to donate to any of our members. A few folks have already started raising money!

You can also show your support by adding the [D&D Twibbon](#) to your Twitter or Facebook profile.

How Do I Play?

Come join our Extra Life team! Join a D&D group, or try out a digital game—either newer titles such as *Sword Coast Legends* or

Neverwinter, or classics like *Baldur's Gate II* and *Icwind Dale*. Alternatively, join some friends and play D&D board games like *Dungeon!*, *Lords of Waterdeep*, or *Temple of Elemental Evil*.

To participate, follow these steps:

- Join Extra Life and set a personal goal.
- When creating your Extra Life account, choose “Join a Team” and select “Dungeons & Dragons.”
- Complete the remaining steps for creating an account.
- Customize your page. For tips on customizing your page to help generate donations, [download this toolkit](#).
- Decide what you want to play and when you want to play it, then spread the word to potential donors.

Can I Organize My Own Event?

Want to organize your own group? After you've joined the D&D team, take the following additional steps:

- Reach out to other D&D players in your community (including online). Walk them through the sign-up steps and have them download the toolkit.
- Customize your page and share it with your players. Encourage them to customize their own pages.
- Find a place to play. Talk to your local game store, or find a space where no one's going to mind if you're gaming for long hours.
- Create a schedule. Players don't need to play for the entire weekend. Having a rotating cast of players keeps things exciting and energized.
- Join the on Facebook to promote your event to others and share your success.

What Are the Rewards?

Members of the D&D Extra Life team who raise \$50 and respond to a survey after the event will receive a promotional certificate for use in D&D Adventurers League play.

In addition, last year we previewed the *Dungeon Master's Guide* as the team crossed its reward thresholds. And there's a good chance you'll see some sneak previews again this year. We just can't reveal too much yet...

We'll announce more rewards as we get closer to the Extra Life Tabletop Weekend.

More Questions?

Check out the [Extra Life FAQ](#) or contact [@gregbilsland](#) on Twitter.

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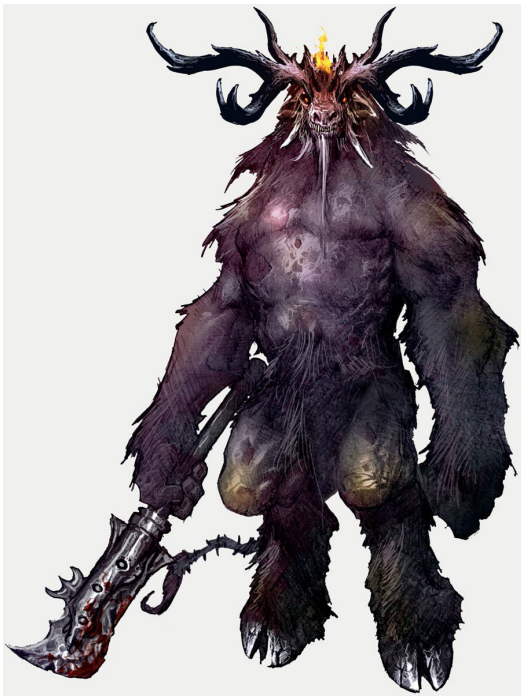


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D&D Adventurer's League

Rage of Demons is coming and the D&D Adventurers League will be at the forefront of the battle. Get in on the action with a free download of the first adventure!

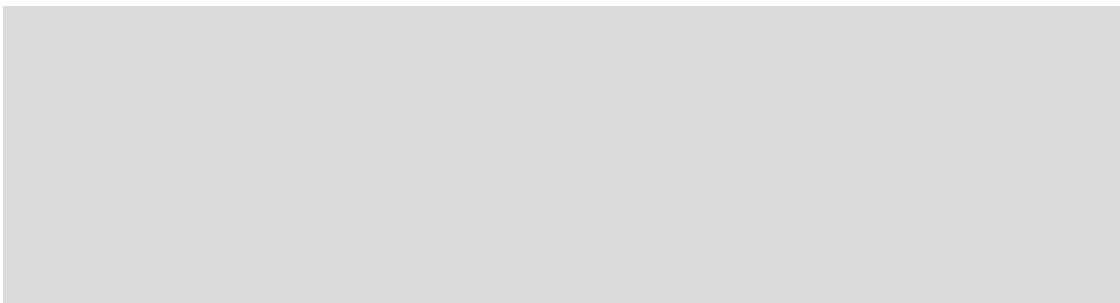
As the demonic fiends from the Abyss terrorize the Underdark and plot their escape to the surface of Faerûn, the D&D Adventurers League, where players join organized games in local venues, stands between them and devastation to the Sword Coast.



You have lots of great reasons to join the D&D Adventurers League. Each adventure is a part of a larger campaign set in the Forgotten Realms, and while each season's storyline is self-contained, there are events and characters that carry over from one season to the next. You can take your character from event to event, earning treasure and experience along the way. The newest season, Rage of Demons, begins in September.

D&D Adventurers League adventures are suitable for new players to jump into at any time. Most of the adventures are only a few hours long, which is great for an evening of play, during the day, or on a weekend. New adventures featuring the madness-infused theme from the Rage of Demons storyline will be available in September to stores and public events worldwide. Lucky D&D fans who journeyed to Gen Con in Indiana (and a few other conventions in August) have been rewarded with a special sneak peek at this new campaign.

Harried in Hillsfar is the first D&D Expeditions adventure for Rage of Demons. It is composed of five different mini-adventures for characters of 1st or 2nd level. Each mini-adventure plays in one to two hours, and introduces the Rage of Demons storyline and the area in and around Hillsfar, a xenophobic city in the southern Moonsea.



RAGE of DEMONS.

ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

HARRIED IN HILLSFAR

In the village of Elventree, near the oppressive city of Hillsfar, a recent string of strange occurrences has the locals on edge. The factions have gathered here on the borders of the forest of Cormanthor to determine what's happening. Is this the machinations of Hillsfar, or something more? Five one-hour mini-adventures for 1st-2nd level characters.

Adventure Code: DDEX3-1

CREDITS

Adventure Design: Shawn Merwin

Development and Editing: Claire Hoffman, Chris Tulach, Travis Woodall

Organized Play: Chris Tulach

D&D Adventurers League Wizards Team: Adam Lee, Chris Lindsay, Matt Sernett, Chris Tulach

D&D Adventurers League Administrators: Robert Adducci, Bill Benham, Travis Woodall, Claire Hoffman, Greg Marks, Alan Patrick



EXPEDITIONS

Debut: July 30, 2015

Release: September 1, 2015

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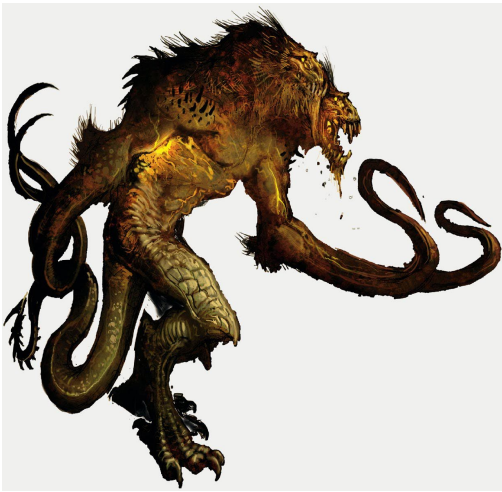
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HARRIED IN HILLSFAR

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)

Harried in Hillsfar is a great way for new players to start off their D&D Adventurers League experience, and existing players can create a new character connected to the current storyline. Many more adventures will be available during the storyline season, including the first high-level adventure written specifically for the D&D Adventurers League, accommodating characters up to 16th level.

Harried in Hillsfar will be available to all stores in the Wizards Play Network. As a special treat for Dragon+ readers, you can also download it for free using the button on this page and kick off your Rage of Demons story now. For more information on the D&D Adventurers League,



including the Player’s Guide and character sheets, head [here](#).

Find a location to play!

[Find a Store](#)



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ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

HARRIED IN HILLSFAR

In the village of Elventree, near the oppressive city of Hillsfar, a recent string of strange occurrences has the locals on edge. The factions have gathered here on the borders of the forest of Cormanthor to determine what's happening. Is this the machinations of Hillsfar, or something more? Five one-hour mini-adventures for 1st-2nd level characters.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Harried in Hillsfar*, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the *Rage of Demons*™ storyline season.

This adventure consists of five mini-adventures, and is designed for **three to seven 1st-2nd level characters**, and is optimized for **five 1st-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. A player with an ineligible character can create a new 1st-level character or use a [pregenerated character](#).

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in and around the city of Hillsfar.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a [DCI number](#). This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the [D&D Adventurers League home](#).

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the [D&D basic rules](#) or the *Player's Handbook*™.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an [official adventure logsheet](#) for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange

arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 1st-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

DUNGEON MASTERING THE ADVENTURE

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.

- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the [D&D basic rules](#) or the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime

activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services. Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
Cure wounds (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing (2nd level)</i>	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Faiths that can call upon spellcasting services in and around Hillsfar include the following: Chauntea, Lliira, Mielikki, and Tempus.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Like many of the other towns and cities on the Moonsea, Hillsfar has seen its share of warfare and turmoil. Hostilities with the elves of Cormanthor, with Zhentil Keep, with the Shadovar, and with their own morally questionable leadership have plagued Hillsfar for more than a century.

For the first time in a long time, the people of Hillsfar can look outside their walls and not see a dire threat looming at their gates. Or at least, none that are obvious.

Rampant xenophobia, steeped in years of misdirected fear and outrage, have led to not just a citizenry distrustful of any non-humans, but also to a series of laws outright forbidding anyone other than humans to become citizens of Hillsfar. The laws of the government and the attitudes of the human citizens mean that the only non-humans allowed into the city are slaves, most of whom fight for their lives at the Arena—to the delighted jeers of the human populace.

The outskirts and rural lands around Hillsfar, because of these laws, are littered with non-human refugees, many who lost everything when they were evicted from their homes and businesses within the city. Some of these refugees plot against the authorities of their former home, but most simply try to survive through commerce, farming, or other legal (or illegal) pursuits.

When rumors of strange happenings around Hillsfar reached the ears of the five factions, representatives of each established camps near the village of Elventree. From these bases, the factions send out agents to investigate these strange tales, hoping to prevent any major calamities—or profit from them.

OVERVIEW

Harried in Hillsfar is broken into five mini-adventures, each designed for **one to two hours of play**. Therefore if you are attempting to run all five missions in one session, you need a minimum of five hours to do so (and probably much more). If running this adventure as part of an event that cycles players through quickly, the DMs should be familiar with the mini-adventures they are running.

At public events, time is often the most important factor. Get the players into the mini-adventure as quickly as possible, keep an eye on the clock, and take whatever shortcuts are necessary to stay on schedule. Remind the players of the time limits, and encourage them to take the adventures at face value rather than looking for any hidden plots or side quests.

If time is not an issue, let the characters spend more

time interacting with the non-player characters within the mini-adventures. It is not required that the missions be played in order, although some equipment found in earlier missions might help more in later ones.

If an adventurer complete all five missions, they should have collected the entire secret message that provides a hint about a secret in this season of Expedition adventures.

ADVENTURE HOOK

If you are running this adventure as a longer play experience rather than as individual missions, you might want to use the long adventure hook introduction, which provides some additional roleplaying and information-gathering opportunities.

If you are running individual missions rather than the entire adventure, consider using the short adventure hook introduction. Using the long adventure hook introduction for an individual mission might take longer than desired.

With the factions invested in finding the source of the strange occurrences in the lands around Hillsfar, each faction established a faction camp near the village of Elventree, on the edge of the Cormanthor Forest near Hillsfar. Each camp serves as a base of operations for the corresponding faction.

Characters already enrolled in a faction received word from a representative of their group that assistance was needed in the Hillsfar area. The instructions were simple: spend some time exploring near Hillsfar and investigate anything strange you might encounter. After investigating completely, return to the faction camp and report. **The faction members are also told not to interrupt or hinder the investigations of the other factions under any circumstance. In fact, since assisting another faction often provides better information, be as cooperative as possible toward other factions.**

Characters not already a member of a faction can join one at any time, and they get the chance to interact with a representative of each faction during one of the missions. It is assumed that these "factionless" characters are simply traveling or adventuring in the area around Hillsfar, following rumors of strange occurrences.

SHORT INTRODUCTION

When the players are ready to being, read:

Vague and bizarre rumors brought you to Hillsfar. The rumors ranged from leprechauns showering travelers with gold to undead armies terrorizing the Hillsfar farmsteads.

Perhaps the wildest rumor you heard turned out to be true: all the non-human citizens within the walls of the city-state of Hillsfar have been evicted. The only non-humans left in the city are the slaves who fight at the Arena. Fights to the death, it is said. Anyone not obviously human is turned away at the Hillsfar Gate, which is the only way into and out of the walled city.

In your travels, you and your group found a poor, suffering human on the road. Dirty, emaciated, and obviously mad, his ranting at first seemed like the gibberish of a shattered mind. But as the man died at your feet, something about his words struck a chord. They seemed more prophecy than prattle. After some investigation, you learned that the madman's words corresponded to five locations in the Hillsfar area. Certainly it cannot hurt to investigate, right?

Present the players with **Handout 1**, which contains the madman's words and some notes about the locations associated with each of the five verses of the prophecy.

The players might have questions about these five areas. If you are running the game in a venue where time is a factor, don't feel the need to provide information other than the location. Get the characters into the mission, and let them investigate from there.

If you are not in a timed environment, provide any information you wish about the locations based on details found in the mission location.

LONG INTRODUCTION

When the players are ready to begin, read:

Rumors of strange occurrences brought you to the Hillsfar region. The vague and bizarre rumors ranged from leprechauns showering travelers with gold to undead armies terrorizing the many farmsteads.

The one rumor that turned out to be true was perhaps the wildest of all. All the non-human citizens within the walls of the city-state of Hillsfar were evicted. The only non-humans left in the city are the slaves who fight at the Arena. Fights to the death. Anyone not obviously human is turned away at the Hillsfar Gate, the only way into and out of the walled city.

You travel north on the Moonsea Ride, the often-used merchant road south of Hillsfar, which also navigates through expansive Cormanthor Forest. Others [the other characters] travel with or near you.

A muffled shout bursts from a copse of trees off the road, and an old human man wearing torn and bloody clothes staggers into view. The blood on his clothes comes from small cuts and scratches rather than any large wound. His charge toward you is slow, ponderous, and shaky. Before you can even draw weapons or ready spells, he collapses in the grass. He still shouts, however, although the words grow fainter and fainter with each passing moment.

Anyone approaching the man can see he is old but not elderly, injured but not fatally, and appears to be suffering but for no apparent reason. He keeps shouting the same words, like a mantra, over and over. His sentences are long and rambling. For some reason, the words burn themselves into the players' memories.

Neither Medicine checks nor magical healing assuages the man's pain or madness, and he dies at the feet of the characters after repeating his message several times. The man carries no belongings nor has any distinguishing features. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check shows the lingering effect of possible infernal magic on the man.

Here you have a choice as the DM. If you would prefer the characters get directly into the adventure, provide the players with **Handout 1**. This handout contains the text of the madman's prophecy, as well as notes that the characters collect "off-screen" through gathering rumors, interviewing locals, and drawing upon their own knowledge. These notes allow you to jump straight into each of the missions.

If you would prefer to roleplay the collecting of information concerning the madman's words, you can provide **Handout 2**, which contains just the text of the madman's prophecy. Then you can create NPCs based on the actions of the characters, getting the information piecemeal.

PLAYER HANDOUT: THE MADMAN'S PROPHECY

There is a message from this land's new master, but it is hidden five-fold.

New Master?

The first is at the place where dandelions rise above and cover the people. The virile and the virulent can be one and the same. The hell-tinged one is lost, and then several are found.

Farbough Farms. It must be!

The second runs red with the blood of roots, where an heiress lies and hides her pain in long wooden boxes. She hides more than that though, but only to keep what is hers.

Beets? Goodroot, perhaps?

The third is at the spring of blessed life, where the haunters protect and the protectors haunt. The water runs on, of course, and must be freed for all.

The Spring of Blessed Life. Rumored to be haunted.

The fourth holds the great thundering beasts, but the beasts are gone, to give way to a greater thundering beast with death in its eyes. They await at a place of ancient elven evil.

Rothés? Undead?

The fifth lies where the ancients lie beneath night's marble, forgotten but not gone. The lost wealth of a forgotten time pays terrible dividends now.

A temple of Waukeen? Definitely not Tymora...

MISSION 1: THE BIRTH

The first clue contained in the madman's ravings leads the characters to the farmstead of Ebenz and Bea Farbough, a married couple who run a farm on the outskirts of Hillsfar where they raise goats and chickens, primarily.

As the characters approach the farm, read:

The madman's words spoke of Farbough Farms. The farmhouse, sheds, and barns on the road ahead match the description in the madman's prophecy. Their green-painted walls and yellow roofs make the buildings look like huge dandelions sprouting in the fields.

A pair of short figures carries sloshing buckets from a nearby stream toward one of the barns. A significant amount of noise emanates from inside the farmhouse itself, as if a crowd of angry people are all shouting at once.

When the characters approach, they realize the two small figures carrying buckets are a young female half-orc and a young female dwarf. The two young girls shy away from the characters if spoken to but do not flee. They give no information other than their names: the half-orc is Grona, and the dwarf is Bridd. Any other queries are answered by the pair with a brief, "Ask Ma and Pa" while nodding toward the noisy farmhouse.

After the pair deals with the characters, they continue their chores—watering the livestock and mucking out the barn. If any characters attempt to follow them or otherwise harass them, the pair nervously retreat to the farmhouse and the safety of their foster parents. Humans in the party make the pair even more nervous, which is noticed by any character succeeding on a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

THE FARMHOUSE

When the characters look into the farmhouse, read:

The farmhouse door is propped open with a hay fork, revealing a tumultuous scene. More than 20 people mill about a bustling kitchen. At least 10 are children of various races—none human. The adults, on the other hand, are all human.

A woman of middle years shouts above the din. In one arm she cradles an infant human, while second rests in a sling at her waist. Three other adult humans and a young non-human hold other human newborns. Between the woman and those helping her, there are a total of six human infants.

The two oldest humans in the farmhouse are Ebenz and

Bea Farbough, the owners of this farm. The 10 non-human youngsters are their adopted children, and the human babies are a set of sextuplets that Bea recently gave birth to. The other adult humans are farmhands and servants.

The non-human children (there are 12 total at the farm) lived at Madame Delilah's Home for Orphaned Children in Hillsfar until a couple years ago. With the passing of the law banishing all non-humans from the city, the Red Plumes forcibly removed the youths from Madame Delilah's care. The Farboughs, then unable to have children of their own, happily agreed to take in the ousted orphans.

THE GREAT LAW OF HUMANITY

During his reign, the original First Lord of Hillsfar, Maalthiir, dictated that only humans were to be permitted within the city proper. With his death, the Second Great Law fell out of practice until recently when the current First Lord, Torin Nomerthal, revived the aged practice.

Currently, the only non-humans inside the walls of Hillsfar are found within the Arena; fodder for the crowd's pleasure.

A year after the mass adoption, however, Bea found herself pregnant with not just one child, but six. All of the sextuplets, miraculously, were born healthy and are thriving—although each of the babies has an extra finger on each hand and extra toe on each foot.

The chaos of mealtime within the farmhouse subsides momentarily when the farm's inhabitants notice the characters. Bea, waving a wooden spoon at the room, addresses the characters:

"If you're here for a meal, grab some taters from the bin and peel them and we'll cook them up for you. You'll have to catch and dress your own chicken though."

"But before we eat, make yourselves useful. Someone needs to go and fetch Pynroth: ask the two girls outside where that boy has got off to. If any of you have any skill in husbandry, run out to the goat barn and see if Jovee's kids are ready to pop yet. Verner, take these folks out and introduce them to Jovee. When you're done, come back for a meal."

Before Bea or anyone else at the farm answers questions from the characters, they expect the characters to do the chores assigned to them by Bea.

Verner is a young halfling lad—short and sickly looking, even for a halfling. He is sullen at being made to do more chores before getting supper. He answers adventurer questions with grunts and eye-rolling, although his attitude changes when he sees the state Jovee is in.

WHERE IS PYNROTH?

Pynroth is a tiefling boy—one of the orphans. He is currently going through a rebellious streak. He was told to stay out of the furthest pasture because of dangerous creatures have been seen there as of late. So naturally—like any rebellious youth would—he headed there immediately.

The two girls that the characters encountered earlier know where their foster brother went, but are afraid of getting scolded for not stopping him or telling the Farboughs about his transgressions sooner.

When asked directly, the girls lie—albeit poorly; saying they do not know his whereabouts. A successful DC 5 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals their falsehood.

A successful DC 10 Charisma (Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion) check convinces them to reveal the truth. Humans have disadvantage on Persuasion checks made in this fashion, but advantage on Intimidation checks since the girls are wary of humans due to past mistreatment. Similarly, checks made by creatures of the same race (dwarf or half-orc, respectively) are also made with advantage.

If the Charisma check succeeds on the first attempt, the characters have advantage on initiative checks in the combat with the wild dogs. They also learn that the boy went to the far pasture for no other reason than because he was told not to. The farmhands have run across strange and terrible creatures there: beasts that look like normal creatures but with unusual features and eyes that glow red in the dark of night.

If the original Charisma check fails by more than 5, it takes a long time for the characters to convince the girls to talk. When they finally do, they only tell Pynroth's location and make no mention of the strange creatures. Any initiative checks made by the characters in the encounter with the wild dogs are made with disadvantage.

Regardless of their checks, they eventually learn the location of Pynroth and may seek him out.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH JOVEE?

When Verner leads the characters into the goat barn, read:

High-pitched shrieks of fear and panic greet you as you enter the barn. A couple dozen goats fill the barn, but most huddle in the corners, shying away from a single goat in the center. The hideously distended belly of that goat shows the nanny is pregnant, but she is quite large. Even those of you who have dealt with animal births in the past have likely never seen anything like this.

No check is needed to realize this is something unusual. Verner starts crying and runs over to the suffering goat, but stops in horror before reaching her. He tells the characters that when he was tending to her this morning, she was big but not like this. He begs the characters to help Jovee.

Jovee is in labor, but is having problems for reasons that are about to become apparent. Characters must make a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Nature) check to get the first kid out of Jovee successfully. If the characters think to try to calm Jovee, they can attempt a DC 10 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Success gives the adventurer making the birthing check advantage on that check.

If this first check succeeds, the first kid is wrestled from Jovee—who survives the experience (so far). If not, Jovee dies during the birthing process. Regardless of whether she lives or dies, her kids are born healthy but "different."

The firstborn goat comes out, and it is instantly clear what the problem was. The kid is much larger than a normal newborn goat, with bright red fur, and two heads that stare at you with a mix of curiosity and scorn. It immediately stands and wobbles away with a dismissive "baaaaah" that is deep and long and more than a little unsettling.

Before you can react, another red-furred kid emerges from Jovee. You know it is not uncommon for goats to have twins. Then another kid slides out. Then another. Before you know it, five more kids lie on the ground near their mother; for a total of six—a peculiar feat.

Jovee, if she is still alive, collapses and starts convulsing. Verner cries in alarm and runs over to her; once more begging the characters to intercede. Jovee will not survive unless the characters succeed immediately at a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check or use healing magic on the goat. If the characters save the ailing mother goat, they find their later combat with the demon goats easier.

Characters wishing to examine the newborn goats don't need any check to tell them that the kids are definitely extraordinary. A DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check reveals that the goats definitely are imbued some sort of unholy essence. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check shows the lingering effect of possible infernal magic on the goats. Abilities such as *detect magic* or *divine sense* reveal this without the need of a check.

If the characters talk about killing the goats aloud, or move as there are going to do so, Verner throws himself between the characters and their prey and begs the characters not to hurt the goats.

If the characters refuse to heed the young halfling's pleas, proceed to the combat in Demon Goats, below. In this case, the characters have to fight all the goats, even if they saved Jovee's life.

XP AWARD

If the characters save Jovee, award each character 25 XP.

RESCUING PYNROTH

After learning where Pynroth has gone, the characters must find the young tiefling if they want to get their questions answered (and get the meal, promised above).

Following the mile-long trail where the young tiefling went, the characters soon arrive at the far pasture. When they arrive, read:

Rounding a thicket of large willows, you see the pasture. The normally bucolic setting is marred by a pack of wild dogs surrounding two figures, huddling together in fear. The larger figure is half-elven, wearing leather armor and clumsily brandishing a sickle to keep the yipping, growling dogs at bay. The half-elf has his other arm around a tiefling boy, presumably Pynroth. Tears in the half-elf's cloak and blood on his arm show that the wild dogs mean business.

The young tiefling hides behind Beralt, a member of the Emerald Enclave. Beralt wears the stag symbol of the Emerald Enclave on his armor which members of the faction immediately recognize. He fends off the wild dogs with his sickle while protecting the youngster.

Five **wild dogs** circle the pair until they get an opening to attack. They also are trying to trap their prey until their leader; a **wild dog alpha** arrives.

The wild dog alpha hides among the low-hanging branches of a copse of weeping willows. It waits until the characters have engaged the smaller wild dogs before it charges forward and attacks. The alpha attacks at the end of the first round, or whichever round the characters first engage the other dogs. The large wild dog is hidden until it attacks unless the characters succeed on a Wisdom (Perception) check. On a failed check, the creature has advantage on its first attack.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** Remove 3 wild dogs, and large wild dog is not hiding at start of combat.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add 3 wild dogs.

TACTICS

The dogs harry the half-elf and tiefling until the characters engage the dogs by either attacking them or moving adjacent to one of the dogs or their quarry. At that point all the dogs attack the characters, leaving the pair alone.

The half-elf does not attack the dogs; instead he focuses his efforts on protecting the boy. If an adventurer falls and is in danger of dying, Beralt uses a *potion of healing* to revive that adventurer.

If the large wild dog and at least 50% of the other dogs are defeated, the remaining dogs disengage and flee.

DEVELOPMENTS

Once the dogs have been dealt with, the half-elf introduces himself to the characters as Beralt—an initiate in the Emerald Enclave. The half-elf is training to be a druid, and he was sent by his master to investigate rumors that some of the local wildlife has been behaving strangely. He was tracking this pack of wild dogs when he found them attacking the boy.

If the characters provide information about the strange goats (or even the children with extra digits) at the farm, Beralt confirms that he has seen similar phenomena locally; multiple births, creatures growing to enormous sizes, creatures born with extra digits or limbs, etc. A few have even shown traces of some sort of infernal heritage.

For rescuing him and the boy, Beralt gives the characters a *potion of healing* (if he did not use it in the combat) and a vial of alchemist's fire. He also offers a silver sickle worth 50 gp, and he puts in a good word for them with the Emerald Enclave if they would like to join. After that, he leaves Pynroth in the characters' care and goes on his way.

Finally, if any unaffiliated characters wish to join the Emerald Enclave, Beralt happily sponsors their membership.

TREASURE

Beralt gives the characters a *potion of healing* (if it wasn't used during the fight) and a silver sickle.

DEMON GOATS

This encounter assumes that the characters do not kill the goats immediately after they are born. If they attempted to do so, the goats seem to grow right before their eyes. Run the encounter as is, but give the characters advantage on their first attacks as the goats get their legs.

The characters can accompany Pynroth back to the farm. When they arrive, they find the mutated wildlife in the area has one more surprise for the party:

The scene at the farm looks much as you left it. That is, until a scream erupts from the goat barn. Verner sprints from the barn, limping on an injured leg. Two red-furred goats chase him, making tortured, raspy sounds you might expect to hear in the Abyss. Moments later, the rest of the goats' red-furred brother and sisters emerge. Behind the lot comes the two-headed goat that since you left the barn has grown to the size of a horse. Its newly sprouted horns look like curved pitchforks.

If the characters were able to save Jovee from dying, remove 3 of the goats from the encounter, as they would rather be with their mother than fighting.

Otherwise, the characters walk into the barnyard to face one **giant two-headed goat** and six **goats**. The characters start roughly 40 feet away from the goats after the beasts have exited the barn.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** Remove 4 goats.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Double the giant two-headed goat's hit points.

TACTICS

The goats, including the large goat, *charge* as much as they can to take advantage of their butt attacks. During the battle, the large goat continually brays with a voice that sounds like a low, demonic growl.

DEVELOPMENTS

Hearing the ruckus, the people inside the farmhouse run outside to witness the battle. Obviously, they do not blame the characters for dealing with the obviously corrupted demon goats.

TREASURE

For helping out and rescuing them all from the problems on the farm, Bea offers the characters various homemade goods, 15 total items, ranging from beautiful quilts, a couple kegs of homemade cider, to an heirloom necklace, to basket full of fresh raspberries and other fruits and vegetables. The whole lot can be sold for 150 gp, but each item is worth 10 gp if the characters wish to keep some of them for themselves.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session. If you are playing all of the missions as a single adventure, or playing multiple missions in one session, you can wait and give the rewards for all missions played at the end of the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Wild dog	25
Wild dog alpha	200
Goat	10
Giant two-headed goat	100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Save Jovee	25

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **75 experience points**.

The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **100 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Silver sickle	50
Items from the Farboughs	150

POTION OF HEALING

A description of this item can be found in the basic rules or the *Player's Handbook*.

ALCHEMIST'S FIRE

A description of this item can be found in the basic rules or the *Player's Handbook*.

RENOWN

Emerald Enclave characters only receive **one renown point** for defeating the wild dogs.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this mini-adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP**, **50 gp**, and **five downtime days** for each session you run of this mini-adventure.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

GOAT

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	5 (–3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Charge. If the goat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sure-Footed. The goat has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

GIANT TWO-HEADED GOAT

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charge. If the goat moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sure-Footed. The goat has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The two-headed goat makes two ram attacks. These attacks must be against different targets.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

WILD DOG

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wild dog has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

WILD DOG ALPHA

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wild dog alpha has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wild dog alpha has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wild dog alpha's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Pounce. If the wild dog alpha moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one additional bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the wild dog alpha can long jump up to 25 feet.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

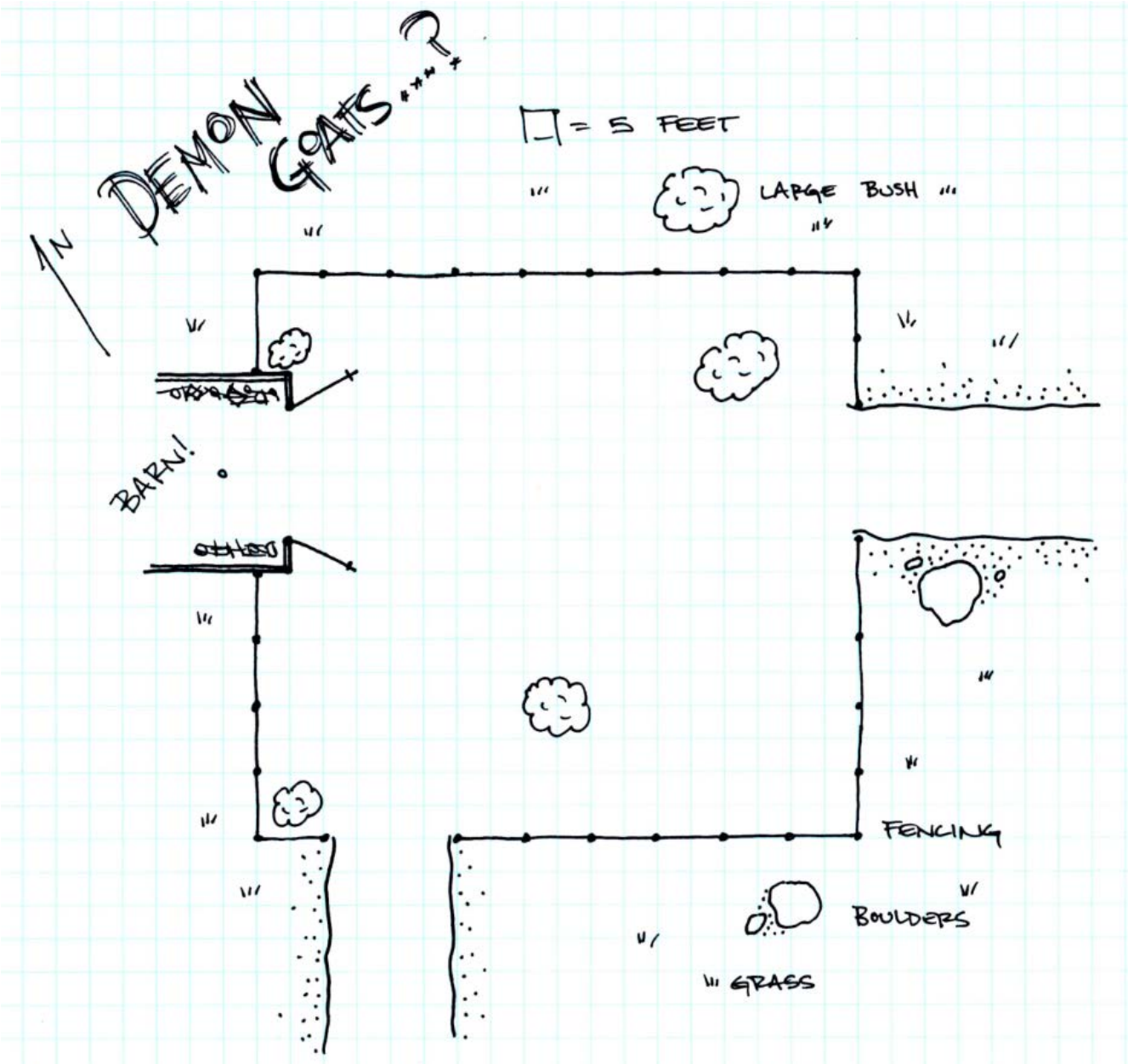
Ebenz and Bea Farbough (EE-benz and BEE FAHR-bo). Married human couple. Bea recently gave birth to sextuplets. The couple has a mess of adopted children.

Pynroth (PINE-roth). Young, male tiefling. Rebellious.

Jovee (JOE-vee). Female goat. Pregnant.

Beralt (ber-ALT). Male half-elf. Member of the Emerald Enclave. Investigating corrupted creatures in the area of Farbough's Farm.

MAP: DEMON GOATS...?



MISSION 2: THE GROWTH

The second clue of the madman's ravings leads the characters to the Goodroot Farm, a place famous for its prodigious beet crop. Right now, with her parents "absent," the farm is being supervised by their half-elven daughter Constance.

As the characters approach the farm, read:

The madman's words spoke of the Goodroots. The fields surrounding this farm teem with laborers, mostly non-humans, picking beets. Some of the beets you see being harvested are twice as large as a halfling's head. And that's saying something! On the porch of the farmhouse, four human soldiers dressed in red cloaks, chain shirts, and helmets with red feathers decorating them surround a half-elven girl. She is definitely not an adult, but she nonetheless stands defiantly with hands on her hips, giving the four humans a piece of her mind, despite their spears and shields.

The human soldiers, led by a tall, muscular captain named Dessandra, are Red Plumes, the official guards and police force of the city of Hillsfar. They are feared and loathed by many citizens of Hillsfar, particularly the non-human population.

Currently, the four **Red Plume guards** are here to retrieve eight casks of the red dye that the Goodroots produce from the beet juice harvested on this farm. The half-elven girl, Constance Goodroot, is the daughter of the farm's owners.

When the characters approach, making their presence known, they hear the end of the argument.

The girl finishes speaking as you approach. The leader of the human guards spits out a blunt warning. "You tell your parents that they have been legally ordered to have eight barrels of dye ready for us by sunrise tomorrow. If the shipment is not ready, the First Lord has demanded that the Red Plumes take possession of the farm due to this breach of contract." With that, the four guards turn and leave the porch.

DEALING WITH THE RED PLUMES

The Red Plumes and their leader Dessandra ignore the characters unless the characters insert themselves into the conflict. Dessandra ignores most comments or questions from the characters. If she is forced to speak to them, her reply is something along these lines: *"Unless you are a legal representative of the Goodroot Beet Farm, I have nothing to say to you. Move along or you will be arrested."*

THE RED PLUMES

The mercenary army of Hillsfar's original First Lord, Lord Maalthiir, the Red Plumes were ousted from the city following his flight and subsequent disappearance.

Following the defeat of the Netherese at Hillsfar's gates, its survivors along with the Tower Guard--the former military force of Hillsfar--were rebranded as the new Red Plumes. To that end, they have been empowered by now First Lord Torin Nomerthal to enforce the Great Law of Humanity both within the city and in the area surrounding it.

They are considered little more than officially-sanctioned bullies by the populace. However, as Hillsfar is a rather wealthy city (due to the large amount of trade it conducts), they are many in number and exceptionally well-equipped; most trouble-makers know to leave them well enough alone.

As long as the characters do nothing that could be interpreted as assaulting (not including threatening) the Red Plumes, they leave without incident. Should one of the adventurers assault or threaten the soldiers attempt to arrest the character--peacefully at first. Any others that attempt to assist the offending character is similarly arrested. If the characters react with force, the guards defend themselves similarly.

Be sure to explain to the player, before an adventurer performs an action that could lead to arrest, that these soldiers are the police force of Hillsfar, and they do not tolerate disrespect or aggressive behavior toward them. If a player still wishes his or her adventurer to behave in such a manner, let that player learn with the consequences at the business end of a cudgel or, worst, a longsword. The Red Plumes treat those who cooperate with brusque words, but otherwise fairly; they do not penalize compliance from those who simply chose poor company.

If there is a battle, and the characters kill or subdue the soldiers, Constance is horrified. She knows that the rulers of Hillsfar are looking for any excuse to seize the farm, and this will undoubtedly lead to that. Since this assault takes place in the open, several farm workers see the attack. One of them fetches a squad of nearly two-dozen Red Plume soldiers (see Returning Plumes, below), who appear at the end of the mission.

QUESTIONING CONSTANCE

Based on the prophecy, the characters should have a good idea that something is wrong at the farm, and it's clear that Constance is in over her head.

When they question her, she tries to tell them that her parents are simply visiting relatives in Daggerdale, but her statements are obviously false. If the characters challenge her story, however, she breaks down in tears.

The girl sobs for a moment, looking broken and lost. Then a look of hope plays across her face. "Perhaps you are the answer to my prayers. Does Chauntea work in such a manner?" She looks past you, out into the fields where the beet harvesting continues unabated. "If you follow me, maybe we can help each other."

Constance leads the characters into the farmhouse and then down a set of steep wooden stairs into a large cellar. Many doors lead to other rooms from the main cellar. The place is filled with casks, barrels, and containers filled with a variety of substances useful in either farming, preserving food, or making dye.

Constance has something terrible to show the characters:

Constance lights a lantern and leads you down into the huge cellar beneath the farmhouse, which looks to hold preserved food, equipment for farming and making dye, and casks full of substances used in those endeavors.

She walks to a corner of the cellar, to a pair of long wooden boxes. She hesitates and levels a serious gaze at you all. "I'm sorry," she says and opens the box. In it are two half-elfen bodies wrapped in tarps. They look peaceful, except their faces wear unsightly growths, bulging beneath the skin--and in some places breaking through in horrible purple ulcers.

"I know this looks terrible, but it is not what you think. I found them in this condition. I hid them because they told me to. You see, I am not currently old enough to inherit the farm from them. If the authorities learn they are dead, Hillsfar will seize the farm and turn me out. If I can hide their deaths for just a few months, I will be old enough to inherit the farm." She bites her lip. "There's something else."

Leading you to another door in the cellar, Constance removes a sturdy oaken bar. Before she opens the door, she says, "When I found my parents down here in the cellar, they were not alone. He was with them." She opens the door and shines her lantern into a darkened room. The room contains empty casks and barrels pushed to the walls. In the far corner, slumped against the far wall, is a drow elf. The grotesque growths cover his face and arms, just as Constance's parents. He is still alive, but his breathing is weak.

THE DROW

Ceilings. The ceilings are approximately 10 feet high.

Light. Only Constance's lantern lights the room. No other light exists other than what the characters have brought with them.

The drow is unconscious, and has most definitely seen better days. He is obviously suffering from the same disease as the Goodroots.

Constance does not know who he is. She never saw him prior to coming upon her dying parents and his unconscious body three days ago. Her parents have contracts with many people, but no drow that she is aware of. She has been giving him water and trying to talk to him, but so far he has not regained consciousness.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Nature) check reveals that the disease is *darkborne rot*—a fungal infection that rapidly overtakes the victim. It originates from the Underdark, and it has no natural cure—even lesser restorative magic and abilities have no effect. The victim's body either fights the infection, or it doesn't. Otherwise removing the infection requires a *greater restoration* or greater magic. Thankfully, none of the characters or Constance are at risk.

A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigate) check finds a rolled up parchment in the coat pocket of the drow. Written in Common, the parchment is a contract between the beet farm and the drow, apparently named Arrizz, who resides in the area and is acting as a liaison with an unnamed svirfneblin city in the Underdark. The contract is for an exchange of gold for beets and beet-byproducts. There is nothing strange or illegal about the contract itself or the terms.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check can bring Arrizz the drow to consciousness, and he can answer questions. He basically provides the same information as the contract describes. He is a smuggler who brokers deals between interested parties both above and below ground. He was meeting secretly with the Goodroots about bringing beet products to some of his customers. Over the two days he was here, staying in the basement out of the sunlight, he and the Goodroots came down with this terrible malady. The drow remains awake for five minutes before lapsing back into unconsciousness.

After the characters have the opportunity to inspect the drow (and question him if they are able to wake him)—they are interrupted.

BOUNTY HUNTERS

Allow each character to attempt a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Those succeeding hear a shuffling sound just before combat begins; they are not surprised and can act in the first round after the lights go out.

Without warning, the door of this cellar room slams shut, and the lantern flies from Constance's hands, plunging the room into darkness. Constance shrieks.

Two **duergar** bounty hunters have been sent by a noble house of a faraway drow city to capture (or kill) the drow Arrizz, who betrayed the house and struck out on his own.

The duergar, a female called Jeela and a male called Gritt, use *invisibility* to enter the room and get into position without being seen. One knocks the lantern from Constance's hands to extinguish it while the other closes the door. With their darkvision they can see in the dark and may have advantage on characters lacking darkvision.

TACTICS

The pair is here to capture the drow, but they believe they should kill the characters first. They use their *enlarge* ability as soon as possible. Note that the duergars's *enlarge* ability requires concentration, so any damage they take forces a Constitution saving throw (DC 10 or half the damage taken, whichever is greater).

Extinguishing the lantern and closing the door are not attacks, so their *invisibility* remains intact until they attack, meaning characters that get to act in the first round still may have trouble finding a target, even if someone creates light.

Neither the drow nor Constance takes any actions during the fight, except to cower (or remain unconscious, in the case of poor, poor Arrizz).

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** The duergar have already used their *Enlarge* ability and cannot use it in this combat.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Give the duergar 20 more hit points each.

DEVELOPMENTS

When the characters leave this room and re-enter the main basement area, they see a large sack, which wasn't there earlier. In the sack is an unconscious gnome wearing the uniform of the Zhentarim. If returned to consciousness, the gnome introduces herself as Joyella. She ran afoul of the drow after her party attempted to rob an underground drow caravan but failed, and a bounty was put on her. She was tracked and captured by the duergar. If the characters release her, she reports back to her Zhentarim superiors about the characters' role in her freedom.

If any unaffiliated characters wish to join the Zhentarim, Beralt attests to their capabilities and sponsors their membership.

TREASURE

The duergar, in addition to their weapons and armor, carry well-made manacles and coins and gems with a total combined worth of 200 gp. They also have a wanted poster, written in Undercommon, detailing the crimes and a description of the drow Arrizz. In a nutshell, his crimes consist of his leaving his drow house without permission.

RETURNING PLUMES

With their duergar and drow problems behind them, the characters still have the problem of the Red Plumes and Constance. Because of her parents' deaths, the dye production process has slowed considerably. Constance needs more time for the dye to be ready, but the Red Plumes expect the shipment by the next morning.

If the characters attacked the Red Plumes earlier, they exit the farmhouse to find a squad of 20 Red Plumes waiting to arrest them. There is no need to play out the battle. Only characters who took an active part in attacking or killing a Red Plume suffer the following consequences.

- If the characters resist arrest, they are killed.
- If the characters only assaulted or threatened the previous group of soldiers without killing anyone, and the characters surrender without a fight, they are found guilty. They must spend 10 downtime days serving a prison sentence, and all of their monetary wealth (their equipment is returned upon release) is taken. For characters with less than 10 downtime days, their character is incarcerated until they earn downtime in another way (DM rewards, for example).
- If the characters murdered any of the soldiers and the characters surrender, they are found guilty. They must spend their first 20 downtime days on a prison sentence, and all of their wealth (aside from adventuring gear) is taken. Before they can be executed, however, Joyella and some of her Zhentarim friends free the characters from their cells in the night. (If the characters belong to a different faction, a representative of their faction is there as well). Note this on the characters' log sheet in case it comes up in future adventures. For characters with less than 20 downtime days, their character is incarcerated until they earn downtime in another way (DM rewards, for example).

Assuming the characters did not foolishly attack or threaten the original group of Red Plume soldiers, Constance begs the characters to help her hide her parents' demise and assist her in keeping the farm.

How the characters do this is up to their creativity and your best judgment. If they go the route of trying to deceive or persuade the Red Plumes, the DC to do so is 10. They may try to work through the night to get the shipment ready. The characters may use Athletics, Nature, or other skills to simulate working in the fields, mixing the beet juice with other substances to make the dye, or fixing the vats and barrels to store it in. A bribe of 25 gold pieces or more to the captain of the Red Plume squad also works extremely well.

Constance does not agree to solutions that involve her marrying a character (she is not yet of age, otherwise she would be getting the farm), selling the farm to the characters, etc. While the characters might have helped her, she does not know them well enough to put that level of trust into them. Forged deeds, on the other hand, are within the realm of possibility.

If the characters are able to help Constance retain her farm, or even if they make a serious effort to do so but fail, she thanks them profusely and offers them a *potion of fire breath* and 2 vials of acid for their efforts. If not, she runs away at the first opportunity, hoping to make her own way somehow. (The characters could tell her that the Farbough farm from Mission 1 might be a place of refuge...)

ARRIZZ'S FATE

Arrizz is in no shape to make his escape. With time, he regains consciousness and will eventually recover, however.

Characters who think that turning in the drow and receiving the bounty should be warned that retrieving the reward would mean traveling to a distant, and thoroughly evil drow empire, where being captured into slavery would likely be the best result. Characters that still insist on pursuing this may spend 10 days of downtime during which time Arrizz makes his escape, leaving the characters devoid of their prospective reward. All is not lost, however. The characters eventually fall into with a merchant caravan who pays them 20 gp for their service. But one doesn't spend that much time in the Underdark and leave unscathed.

The mind-twisting darkness of the Underdark coupled with the horrors found within wreaks havoc on the unprepared. If any characters venture into the Underdark in search of the bounty for Arrizz's return, they do not return unscathed.

Each character so traveling must succeed on a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw or pick up some minor peculiarities on their trip. These quirks should be minor and devoid of any sort of substantive, mechanical effect. Examples include:

- A fondness for insects
- Talking to oneself
- Terrifying dreams
- A penchant for under/overcooked food
- Hearing voices
- Mild depression

These effects last until the character has spent a total of 10 downtime days recovering from their excursion.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session. If you are playing all of the missions as a single adventure, or playing multiple missions in one session, you can wait and give the rewards for all missions played at the end of the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Guard	25
Duergar	200

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Help Constance Keep Farm	25

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **75 experience points**. The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **100 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Duergar's gold	200

POTION OF FIRE BREATH

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

VIAL OF ACID

A description of this item can be found in the basic rules or the *Player's Handbook*.

RENOWN

Zhentarim characters only receive **one renown point** for releasing Joyella from the duergar bounty hunters.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this mini-adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP**, **50 gp**, and **five downtime days** for each session you run of this mini-adventure.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

DUERGAR

Medium humanoid (dwarf), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail, shield)

Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	9 (–1)

Damage Resistances poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Dwarvish, Undercommon

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Duergar Resilience. The duergar has advantage on saving throws against poison, spells, and illusions, as well as to resist being charmed or paralyzed.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the duergar has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Enlarge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the duergar magically increases in size, along with anything it is wearing or carrying. While enlarged, the duergar is Large, doubles its damage dice on Strength-based weapon attacks (included in the attacks), and makes Strength checks and Strength saving throws with advantage. If the duergar lacks the room to become Large, it attains the maximum size possible in the space available.

War Pick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, or 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage while enlarged.

Invisibility (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The duergar magically turns invisible until it attacks, casts a spell, or uses its Enlarge, or until its concentration is broken, up to 1 hour (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the duergar wears or carries is invisible with it.

GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

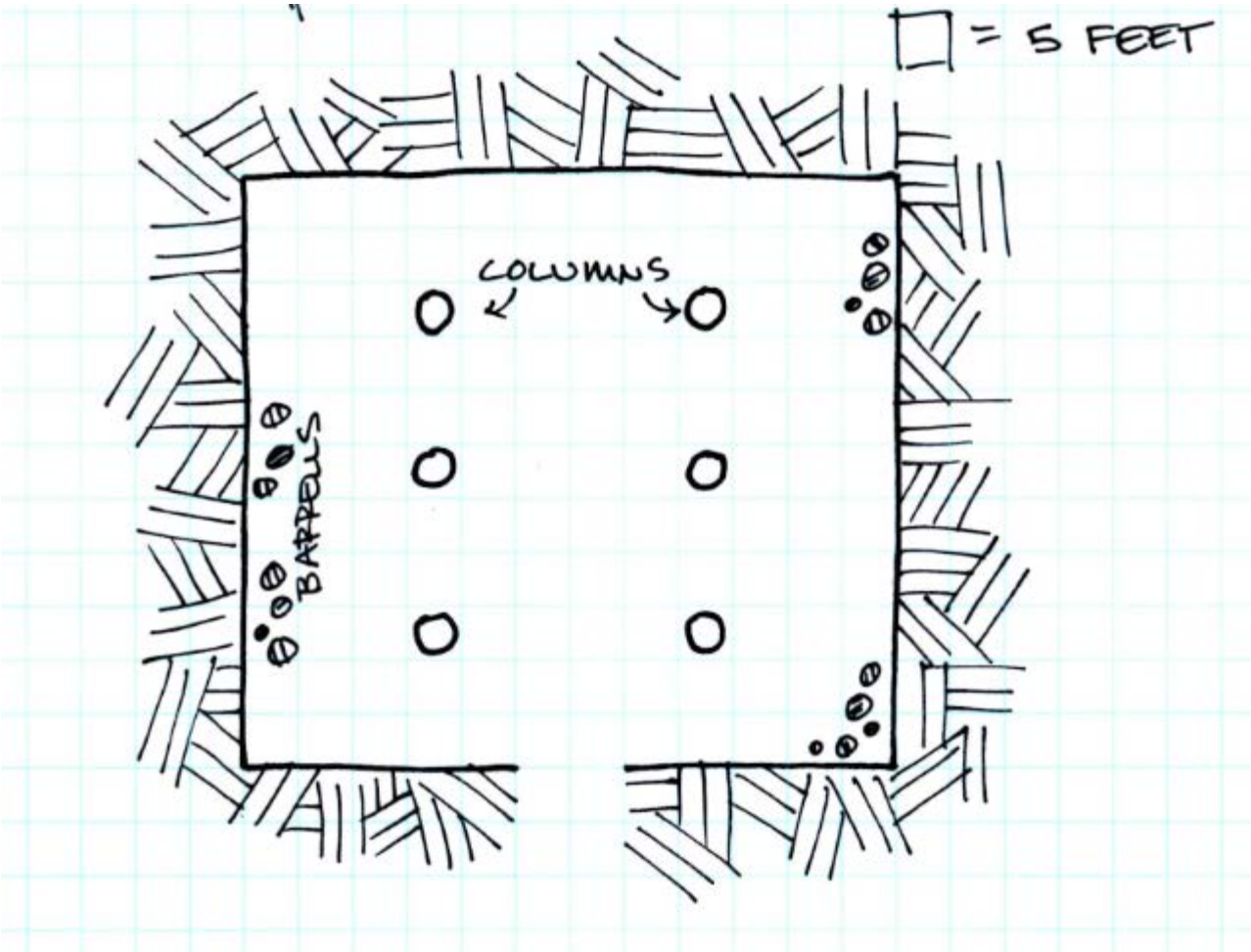
This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Constance Goodroot (CON-stance). Female half-elf. Daughter of the owners of Goodroot Farm. Running the farm in her parents's absence. Discovered the drow hiding in the cellar.

Dessandra (DAY-sand-ruh). Human captain of a Red Plume patrol. Acquisitioning red dye from the Goodroots.

Arrizz (uh-REEZ). Male drow. Fled from his home in the Underdark and picked up a strange fungal infection along his travels. Happened across the Goodroot Farm and took refuge in the cellar to recover.

MAP: THE GROWTH



MISSION 3: THE LIFE

The third clue of the madman's ravings leads the characters to the edges of the Cormanthor Forest, where rumors of hauntings, strange lights and noises, and more than a few disappearances have kept most people away.

This area is home to a spring sacred to the elves and humans in the area. The spring is within the forest, but close enough to the border that the territory is often disputed between the elves of Cormanthor and the humans of Hillsfar. Because of this, an unwritten treaty exists in the area: pilgrims going to the spring are to be left alone by elf and human alike.

Due to the difficulties inherent in combating the jackalweres, it may be recommended that the characters play Missions 1 and 2 beforehand.

The madman's words spoke of the Spring of Blessed Life. Local legends state that those who drink from the spring before important events--childbirth, marriage, or coming of age, for example--find good health and good fortune for years afterward.

Recent rumors, however, speak of the area around the spring becoming suddenly haunted and unwelcoming. Supernatural phenomena drive people mad as they seek the spring, pilgrims of the spring go temporarily blind as they seek it, and several people have not returned from pilgrimages there.

You find yourself on the edge of the Cormanthor Forest, at the headway of the trail that leads into the forest and to the Spring of Blessed Life. The trail is well marked and clear, as it is frequently traveled.

A family of jackalweres has taken residence in the area, killing and devouring those who seek out the spring--stealing the offerings that the pilgrims intended to leave there. Their shapechanging abilities lure people astray, and their immunity to normal weapon damage renders them more or less impossible to kill by common folk.

A yellow faerie dragon called Zook--tasked by the goddess Mielikki (neutral good goddess of forests) to protect the area--does not have the power to defeat the jackalweres, so she instead resorts to scaring away pilgrims with her magic. It is her hopes that by keeping away weaker visitors, more powerful adventurers might come to investigate and deal with the jackalweres.

ROLEPLAYING ZOOK, THE FAERIE DRAGON

For a faerie dragon, Zook has a pretty grim outlook on life. That isn't to say that she doesn't enjoy a good joke at someone else's expense--she just doesn't laugh for quite as long. Having company makes her feel a bit better, but also makes scaring people off make her feel that much worse.

THE FIRST VICTIM

As the characters move along the path toward the spring, they find the walk pleasant and the trail easy to follow. However, that soon changes.

As the canopy gets denser and the sunlight fails to filter through, a sense of darkness or foreboding fills the area. The chirps of the smaller fauna disappear, and a humid haze covers the ground.

Ahead of you a human man is sprawled on the ground just off the trail. He moans and tries to push himself to his feet, but then he collapses again.

This is Wittel, a teamster who transfers goods from the farms around Hillsfar into the city. He and his wife, Dottee, just learned she was pregnant with their first child, so they came into the forest to drink at the spring.

Currently Wittel is conscious but in rough shape. He remembers traveling up the trail but then several figures leaped out of the forest and attacked. They looked like wild dogs, but one of the attackers was definitely larger than a dog. When he regained consciousness, his wife was gone.

Wittel holds an old silvered scimitar that belonged to his father. He brought it for protection, but he doesn't know how to wield it with any skill. If the characters inspect the blade, they can see a bit of blood on the blade.

Wittel insists on accompanying the characters to look for his wife, and he gladly lets an adventurer proficient with the scimitar wield it in his place. He refuses healing, saying that he will be fine and that Dottee might need it more than him.

THE TERRIBLE UNKNOWN

As the characters travel deeper into the forest, Zook attempts to drive the characters away with her magic. In addition to the spells and abilities she normally has available, Mielikki has granted her some extra power in her arsenal. She only uses this power to frighten and confuse innocents, never to directly harm them.

Moving deeper into the forest, you begin to realize something isn't quite right here. The sun appears briefly to guide your travels toward the spring, only to appear later in the wrong place, showing that you somehow got turned around despite your best efforts and expert navigation. Magic is at play here for sure.

Sudden unearthly shrieks ring out from behind trees, but investigation shows nothing there. Strange lights draw you down a side path, only to disappear just before you are close enough to find their source.

PIT TRAPS

Allow any characters in the lead as the group moves through the forest to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Success find a 20-foot-deep **pit trap** in the middle of the trail, cleverly covered with twigs, leaves, and grass. If not found, the characters in the lead must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the pit for 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

At the bottom of the pit is an elven skeleton that has no treasure. It is centuries old, placed in the pit by Zook to make it seem more scary. The jackalweres dug the pit (and others) to capture prey.

As the characters are dealing with the pit, either climbing from it or investigating it, Zook invisibly flies up to the character that appears to be the most susceptible to his *euphoria gas* (targeting a big dumb fighter type) and breathes. If the adventurer fails the saving throw, he or she has visions of a terrible wave of death coursing toward the group. The adventurer takes off in a random direction through the forest to escape the death.

The affected adventurer runs directly toward another 20-foot-deep pit trap, and must attempt the DC 15 Dexterity saving throw with no chance of seeing the pit beforehand. Any characters chasing the affected adventurer must make the same Dexterity saving throw to avoid the pit trap, but with advantage.

THE NEXT VICTIMS

As the characters move deeper into the forest, closer to the Spring of Blessed Life, the odd phenomena increase in scope and frequency.

The strange lights, sounds, and unnatural effects increase the further you travel into the Cormanthor Forest. Spectral shapes occasionally float at the edge of the mist-shrouded path, only to melt away upon closer inspection. It is difficult to tell even what direction you are traveling now.

Unexpectedly, the trail opens into a small clearing. The center of the cleared area contains a grisly scene of dead and mutilated bodies, all human. Their wounds look like a multitude of bite marks made by small canine creatures.

Just as you start to investigate, a noise interrupts you. Coming into the clearing from a different direction are two humans, a male and a female. They are covered in sweat, are breathing as if having run, and have a look of panic in their eyes.

The couple are shapechanged jackalweres, calling themselves Francesca and Voltz, and hoping to earn the trust of the characters while leading them into a trap containing the whole jackalwere clan a few miles away.

A few hours ago they slew these pilgrims, dragged two of the bodies away to feast on, donned their clothes, and then returned to search the rest of the bodies. With the characters now present, the jackalweres pretend to be survivors of the attack.

If the characters investigate the bodies on the ground, they find that these people all wear symbols of Mielikki, but carry none of the equipment typical of adventurers. They have nothing of true value, instead bearing items of natural beauty or significance that would be offered as a sacrifice to the nature god: exotic flowers and plants, animal bones, etc. However, one of the bodies still clutches a lantern, and there are 10 flasks of oil in a sack near the body. This oil might come in handy to fight the jackalweres later.

If the characters question the couple, they tell a convincing story: the six of them are followers of Mielikki, and they came to leave offerings at the Spring of Blessed Life. Some dog-like creatures attacked, but the couple escaped into the fog. The characters must succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to even get a hint that something is amiss—the pilgrims only seem nervous, which is natural for the current situation. Only on a DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) check do the characters sense that the couple is being inordinately sly.

If the characters don't catch on to the deception, the two claim to know the way to the spring, begging the characters to accompany them there. They also said that they heard a woman crying for help in that direction, which makes Wittel even more desperate to get there quickly

In this case, the jackalweres lead the party deeper into the woods toward the spring, but also toward the waiting trap of the full jackalwere clan. Sensing what is going to happen, Zook intervenes. She begins to invisibly harass the jackalweres, causing them to start waving their hand and cursing—and then snarling and immediately changing into their hybrid forms in rage and frustration. In this case, combat starts with the jackalweres already in hybrid form and getting a round of surprise on the characters.

BATTLING THE JACKALWERES

If their ruse is detected by the characters before Zook must intervene, the two **jackalweres** must use the first round of combat to change form. This takes an action, so they cannot attack that round.

During the second round, the jackalweres snarl and hiss loudly, calling three **jackals** to the battle. At the end of the second round, these three jackals arrive and attack. At the end of the third round, three more **jackals** arrive and join the battle.

SLEEP GAZE AND FEY ANCESTRY

The jackalweres's sleep gaze is a magical sleep effect. As such, characters with fey ancestry are immune to its effects.

TACTICS

The jackalweres cannot be hurt by normal weapons. This is going to be challenging to players without access to silvered weapons or ways to damage the monsters using magic.

If these missions are played in order, the characters should have a vial of alchemist's fire and silvered sickle from Mission 1, and a *potion of fire breath* and 2 vials of acid from Mission 2. With Wittel's silvered scimitar found earlier (see The First Victim, above), plus any magical attacks the characters might have and the flasks of oil, the characters should be able to mount a successful fight.

Rather than rising to the challenge and thinking outside the box when challenged like this, some players may sulk and complain. If this happens, remind the players of other tactics they can use: helping other characters to give them advantage on attacks, grappling and pinning the jackalweres, or attacking the normal jackals instead to keep them off any spellcasters who can actually harm the jackalweres.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** One jackalwere flees at the start of combat and returns at the end of the third round.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add a jackalwere and three jackals. All of these appear at the end of the third round.

USING WITTEL AND ZOOK

You have other wildcards at your disposal as a DM if the combat goes poorly for the characters: Zook and Wittel. If the battle is looking bad for the characters, Zook can aid them. The faerie dragon should not become the heroine of the story, but she can assist the characters by blinding the jackalweres with her *color spray*, distracting them with magic, or even performing some other type of assistance that you can insert. For example, using the power conferred onto her by Mielikki, she could make a fighter's nonmagical sword glow with radiance for 1 round if the fighter sacrifices 2 (1d4) hit points. This would allow the fighter to do radiant damage on a hit for one round.

Wittel is less effective as a threat than Zook, but he is desperate to rescue his wife and would be willing to sacrifice himself to save her. In the event that an adventurer succumbs to the jackalwere's *sleep gaze*, Wittel wakes that adventurer using his action. In more dire situations, he can stabilize a dying adventurer or even throw himself into the path of an incoming attack, though he is likely to be slain in the event of the latter.

DEVELOPMENTS

The jackalweres have 4 golden earrings worth 25 gp each but no other gear or treasure.

When the battle concludes, Zook shows herself and flits around the characters, trying to get them to follow her to the spring, where Wittel's wife can be found, unconscious. If any of the characters speak Draconic or Sylvan, Zook explains the situation. She warns the characters against trying to fight the entire jackalwere clan, since there are many of them spread out in the woods. It would take a larger force to clear them out.

AT THE SPRING

When the characters arrive at the Spring of Blessed Life, they find Wittel's wife Dottee unconscious on a patch of moss. She can be revived with healing magic or a DC 5 Wisdom (Medicine) check.

Zook keeps a small cache of treasure here that she has collected over the years. The stash contains 100 gp worth of trinkets, baubles, and coins. There is also a *scroll of comprehend languages* in the stash that Zook allows the characters to take.

By saying a prayer to Mielikki and drinking the water of the spring, any non-evil adventurer gains a small boon. They begin the next mission (or their next adventure) with inspiration. Evil-aligned characters only receive this boon if they did or said nothing that could be construed as evil while in the forest (DM's discretion). This inspiration should be noted on the adventure log as it lasts until used or until the character has completed all of the missions of this adventure, whichever happens first.

Zook is also an ally of the Harpers, and she gives a glowing report to her contacts in that group regarding any characters who are members or who want to become members.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session. If you are playing all of the missions as a single adventure, or playing multiple missions in one session, you can wait and give the rewards for all missions played at the end of the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Jackal	10
Jackalwere	100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Survive the Pit Traps	50

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **75 experience points**. The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **100 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Jackalwere's Earrings	100
Zook's Stash	100

SCROLL OF COMPREHEND LANGUAGES

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

RENOWN

Harper characters only receive **one renown point** for defeating the jackalweres.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this mini-adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP**, **50 gp**, and **five downtime days** for each session you run of this mini-adventure.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

JACKAL

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 3 (1d6)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	3 (–4)	12 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The jackal has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The jackal has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the jackal's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 – 1) piercing damage.

JACKALWERE

Medium humanoid (shapechanger), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +4, Perception +2, Stealth +4

Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common (can't speak in jackal form)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Shapechanger. The jackalwere can use its action to polymorph into a specific Medium human or a jackal-humanoid hybrid, or back into its true form (that of a Small jackal). Other than its size, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The jackalwere has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The jackalwere has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the jackalwere's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite (Jackal or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Scimitar (Human or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Sleep Gaze. The jackalwere gazes at one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target succumbs to a magical slumber, falling unconscious for 10 minutes or until someone uses an action to shake the target awake. A creature that successfully saves against the effect is immune to this jackalwere's gaze for the next 24 hours. Undead and creatures immune to being charmed aren't affected by it.

FAERIE DRAGON (YELLOW)

Tiny dragon, chaotic good

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 14 (4d4 + 4)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Arcana +4, Perception +3, Stealth +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Draconic, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Superior Invisibility. As a bonus action, the dragon can magically turn invisible until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the dragon wears or carries is invisible with it.

Limited Telepathy. Using telepathy, the dragon can magically communicate with any other faerie dragon within 60 feet of it.

Magic Resistance. The dragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The dragon's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast a number of spells, requiring no material components. A yellow faerie dragon has the spells listed below.

1/day each: *color spray*, *dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *mirror image*

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.
Hit: 1 piercing damage.

Euphoria Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales a puff of euphoria gas at one creature within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw, or for 1 minute, the target can't take reactions and must roll a d6 at the start of each of its turns to determine its behavior during the turn:

1–4. The target takes no action or bonus action and uses all of its movement to move in a random direction.

5–6. The target doesn't move, and the only thing it can do on its turn is make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Zook. A somewhat morose yellow faerie dragon.

Entrusted by Mielikki to guard the area, she found the jackalweres beyond her capabilities. She instead resorted to frightening away the creatures's potential victims.

Wittel (WHIT-uhl). Male human teamster. He and his wife Dottee were attacked by creatures. Wittel was left for dead, but his wife was taken by the attackers.

Dottee (DOT-ee). Female human. Pregnant wife of Wittel. Taken by the jackalweres.

Francesca and Voltz (fran-CHESS-kuh and VOLTS). Jackalweres. Bad news.

MAP: THE NEXT VICTIMS



MISSION 4: THE DEATH

The fourth clue of the madman's ravings leads the characters to the Allano rothé farm. A rothé is a large beast popular in the area as beasts of burden, a source of meat, and occasionally as mounts. This particular farm is one of the largest rothé-raising establishments in the Hillsfar area. Unfortunately, the farm was built above a place of ancient evil.

One of the farmhands, a high elf named Seppremis, learned that there was once an outpost here used by the fey'ri, creatures of elven lineage (primarily sun elves of House Dlardrageth) who consorted with infernal creatures to strengthen their bloodline. After searching, he found a secret entrance to the underground complex used by the fey'ri to perform rituals.

He explored the place and learned some of its secret. With this vile knowledge, he decided to attempt the rituals that he believes can bring him great power and wealth. He murdered everyone and slaughtered the rothé to carry out the rituals. The characters are about to see those rituals in progress.

The madman's words spoke of rothé and the possibility of the undead. The unmistakable stench of death assaults your senses as you approach the Allano rothé farm, where the madman's prophetic words led you. In the pastures beyond the barns and farmhouse, large furry lumps lie rotting. Dozens of rothé, old and young, litter the fields. A few are missing heads and legs.

A thorough inspection of the farm and surrounding area shows no sign of any of the residents, living or dead. Approximately 20 people must live and work on the farm, and there are signs of struggle but no blood in the living areas or barns.

Just as you are about to give up on your investigation regarding what happened here because of a lack of evidence, you notice a few fresh scuff marks that end in the middle of the floor in one of the larger barns.

No check is needed to find and open the trapdoor in the barn floor. Opening it reveals a vertical shaft and wooden rungs staked into the walls, forming a ladder. The wood is fresh and not aged at all.

The shaft descends several hundred feet, ending in an unlit passageway. The floor at the bottom of the shaft is sticky with blood. Since it has not completely dried yet, it must be relatively fresh. The passageway runs almost a mile before ending in a large room.

LADY INEDDRA

As the characters prepare to descend, a voice calls out. An elven woman dressed in scholar's garb addresses them. She introduces herself as Lady Ineddra, and she tells them she is from the forest of Cormanthor.

She recently heard that an elf who worked on this farm was rumored to be investigating the history of the fey'ri—foolish elves who consorted with demons and devils a long time ago in order to gain strength and power. She fears investigating these creatures and their history can lead to nothing but misery. She also believes this area once held a fey'ri outpost, so she came to investigate.

Although she does not wish to accompany the characters (she is no adventurer), she offers 100 gold pieces if the characters will investigate and report back to her. She also wears a pin showing she is a member of the Lord's Alliance.

GUARDIAN STATUES

Light. This room is unlit.

The room ahead of you is decorated in a very strange motif. The bas-relief carvings and other stonework is delicate and finely crafted, seeming elven in nature. However, the scenes depicted are quite terrible and shocking: "demonic" is the best word to describe it.

Six massive statues dominate the center of the room. The three northernmost statues depict elves, while the three southernmost are carved to represent demons. The two sets of statues face each other, and each pair share certain features. The first pair wield wicked swords, the second pair highlight spiders and snakes, and the last pair wield scourges and arcane wands.

Etched onto the floor in Elven is a phrase that was apparently also translated recently into Common in chalk: "To pass, you must speak the titles of each of the three, divided by three."

Then etched into the floor is a long string of letters:

TLLHOAERDSDYLVAEAGYNOEONRMY

The easternmost and westernmost squares in the room are safe for characters to enter. If they step into the other squares, however, they trigger the trap.

STATUE TRAP

If a character steps between any of the pairs of statues without first speaking the title of that particular statue, the statue animates and attacks. Each statue requires a different saving throw. Those who succeed take only half damage.

- DC 10 Dexterity: 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage
- DC 10 Constitution: 3 (1d6) poison damage
- DC 10 Charisma: 2 (1d4) psychic damage

The titles of each of the demons depicted in the statues, and shared by the corresponding elf patron, are mingled in the string of letters. Every third letter goes together, until you get three names: THE SLAYER, LORD VENOM, and LADY AGONY

If the characters speak the titles correctly and pass, the statues animate and bow slightly as the characters pass.

Give the players a couple of minutes to see if they can come up with an answer. If not, tell them that they can either turn back or continue through the room and take the damage.

THE ABYSSAL MAWS

When the characters enter the next room, read:

This room continues the motif of elf and demon comingling. Nine gaping demonic maws adorn the walls of the room, each with a number on them: one through nine. The maws are holes in the walls large enough to climb through, but the gaps are filled with a magical darkness that obscures what is on the other side.

The floor and the rest of the walls form a mosaic that obviously represent the Abyss, the home of the demons. The infinite layers of that horrific place are represented with breathtaking and terrible beauty.

No skills or spells can discern a difference between the maws, and nothing happens if the characters reach a limb or throw an object into them. Only when an adventurer steps through completely does anything happen.

Characters stepping through the maw labeled 8 (the symbol of infinity representing the endless Abyss) on the map find the hallway into the final room.

An adventurer stepping through any other maw are spit back out and take 3 points of necrotic damage. That maw then magically closes, removing it as an option.

If the characters appear to be having problems figuring out which portal Though it is difficult, a character succeeding on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the dust on the floor in front of portal 8 has been disturbed—likely by the passage of person or persons unknown.

TO BUILD A DEMON

Ceilings. Ten feet high.

Light. Brightly light by lanterns and torches.

Sound. Chanting.

Stepping through the correct maw, the characters arrive at the final room of the complex, where Seppremis attempts to animate a goristro demon.

This large room is supported by four thick pillars of purple stone. A dead human body is lashed to each. Bubbling cauldrons of vile goo cook over fires in the four corners of the room, with an odd arm or leg sticking out of the cauldrons.

In the center of the room, resting on a purple stone slab, is a grotesque form. It looks like the head of a rothé has been attached to the body of a human.

Behind the table, an elf, arms and face covered in blood, cackles madly at your appearance. "Perfect. When my creation rises, you will be its first meal!"

From out of the each of the four columns step four vaguely humanoid mounds of flesh. Similarly, baboon-like demons leap from the cauldrons and move toward you threateningly.

The fleshy creatures from the columns are 4 **manes**, and the ape-like creatures are 4 **dretches**. Seppremis's stats are irrelevant, for he is just a commoner. He has already completed his part of the ritual, however. If attacked successfully, he simply dies—but the ritual plays out regardless.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** Remove 1 dretch and 1 manes.
- **Strong or very strong party:** No changes.

TACTICS

The manes do not attack the characters. Instead, they simply move towards the stone slab and use their action to become fuel for the ritual. Essentially, they disappear in a flash of light and sickly smoke and are assimilated into the dead carcass laying on the slab.

The dretch attack the characters normally, trying to keep them away from the center of the room.

If a total of 12 manes fuel the corpse before the characters can kill all of the dretch and at least 4 manes, the goristro is summoned from the Abyss. If not, the ritual fails.

DEVELOPMENTS

The round after a manes disappears, another one reappears at the start of a round. Then, as the last creatures to act that round, the manes moves into corpse unless it is unable to do so.

Cauldrons. The cauldrons are no longer a part of the ritual. Destroying or upsetting them does nothing.

Goristro Corpse. The dead thing on the slab animates only if a total of 12 manes fuel it. Until then, it just lies there. It is tethered to the slab with 4 chains with good locks. If the corpse can be removed from the slab with 4 successful DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) checks and then a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check, the ritual is also stopped. The chains are AC 18 and have 10 hp. They are immune to poison and psychic damage. If the ritual succeeds, read:

As the twelfth flesh creature gets absorbed into the corpse, a loud explosion rocks the room, sending you all flying. Where the terrible corpse just rested, there is now a creature more terrifying than anything you have ever seen. As tall as a giant but with the head of a bull, it emanates wicked power and burns your eyes; temporarily blinding you. It takes you in with a red-eye stare, bellows, then simply disappears. Something horrifying has just been unleashed onto an unsuspecting world.

Returning to the surface, the characters can share what they found with Lady Ineddra. If they do, she pays the promised 100 gold pieces, and also offers a *scroll of false life* as an extra reward.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session. If you are playing all of the missions as a single adventure, or playing multiple missions in one session, you can wait and give the rewards for all missions played at the end of the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Dretch	50
Manes	25

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Solve the Statue Puzzle	20
Survive the Maws	20
Stop the Summoning	20

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **75 experience points**.

The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **100 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Ritual Implements	100
Lady Ineddra's Payment	100

SCROLL OF FALSE LIFE

Find this description in the *Player's Handbook*.

RENOWN

Lord's Alliance characters only receive **one renown point** for reporting what they found to Lady Ineddra.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this mini-adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP**, **50 gp**, and **five downtime days** for each session you run of this mini-adventure.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

DRETCH

Small fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 18 (4d6 + 4)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	5 (–3)	8 (–1)	3 (–4)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft. (works only with creatures that understand Abyssal)

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dretch makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) slashing damage.

Fetid Cloud (1/Day). A 10-foot radius of disgusting green gas extends out from the dretch. The gas spreads around corners, and its area is lightly obscured. It lasts for 1 minute or until a strong wind disperses it. Any creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both, and can't take reactions.

MANES

Small fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	9 (–1)	13 (+1)	3 (–4)	8 (–1)	4 (–3)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Abyssal but can't speak

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) slashing damage.

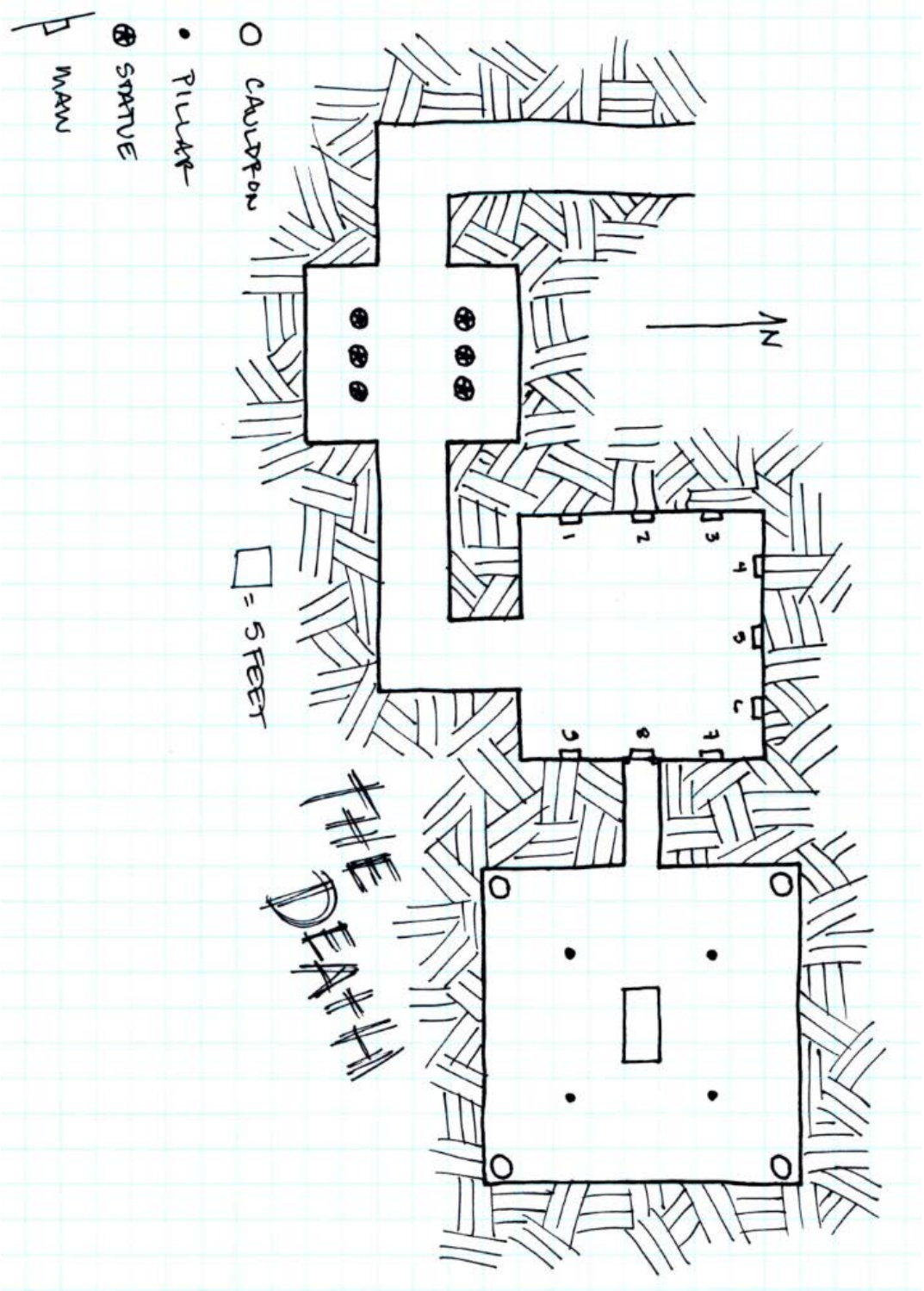
DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Seppremis (SEP-rim-iss). Male high elf. Farmhand on the Allano rothé farm. Plotting to retrace the footsteps of the fey'ri and consort with demons for his own personal power.

Lady Ineddra (ih-NED-druh). Female high elf from Cormanthor. In search of an elf who has been investigating the fey'ri.

MAP: THE DEATH



MISSION 5: THE AFTERLIFE

The fifth clue of the madman's ravings leads the characters to an abandoned graveyard and neglected church of Waukeen (neutral deity of commerce, trade and wealth). The church was established by some of the first humans to settle in this area, and a priest of Jergal (lawful neutral deity of fatalism and proper burial) named Erve recently arrived to take an inventory of the dead buried in the church's graveyard and crypt.

Unfortunately, the old church holds a terrible secret. Some of the original church founders secretly revered the demon lord Graz'zt, the Dark Prince. The soul of their leader remained trapped in the crypts beneath the church. Recent events have released the soul, which possessed the priest of Jergal. The possessed priest, with the help of other followers of Graz'zt drawn to the area, prepare to raise the inhabitants of the crypts and graveyard and march out in search of Graz'zt.

The abandoned church and overgrown graveyard are exactly where you were told. The madman's final prophetic words have led you here.

Surprisingly, the place is not uninhabited. Two humans in loose-fitting peasant garb move among the gravestones, which are made of a black marble. They lead two lumbering rothé, which are attached to harnesses. It is hard to tell whether these caretakers are trying to fix gravestones, pull them up, or do something else entirely.

AMONG THE TOMBSTONES

The "caretakers" are two **cultists** who are exhuming bodies. The rothé they drive are two **rothé zombies** created by the possessed Erve.

When the characters approach, allow each adventurer to attempt a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check. Those who make the check notice that the rothé are sewn together and have pure white eyes. Also, the caretakers hide scimitars beneath their clothes. Those who fail the check are surprised and cannot act in the first round, when the cultists and rothé zombies turn and attack.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** Remove one rothé zombie.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add two cultists.

TACTICS

The combat should begin when the first adventurer gets within 40 feet of the monsters. This allows the rothé zombies to charge. The cultists do not expect visitors and fear their enterprise will be reported if the characters aren't permanently silenced.

DEVELOPMENTS

Although the cultists have no treasure, one of them holds a set of keys that look recently used. The only building nearby is the abandoned church, so the characters can make the logical leap that the keys have something to do with the church.

If the characters capture and question the cultists, they happily reveal that they have been sent here by their "Dark Prince," and soon the land of light will bend to the might of their master. They give no more information, however, being respectable cultists, and more than a little insane.

THE CRYPTS OF WAUKEEN

Ceilings. All ceilings in the crypt are 10 feet high.

Light. The rooms of the crypt are brightly lit by torches, lanterns, and braziers.

Sound. Other than the occasional echoing of stone on stone, as the cultists and Erve work, the crypts are silent.

The church is in terrible repair. Much of the stonework is crumbling, and the fine appointments that usually decorate a temple of Waukeen have long since been looted.

However, at the back of the abandoned church, a set of marble stairs descend to a great iron door with a newly oiled lock. The keys that the characters found on the cultists outside fit the lock.

Upon opening the door, the characters see the crypts:

The large iron door opens onto a massive crypt. Every wall contains multiple niches in which rest skeletons long dead. Smaller stone rooms with stone doors fill the crypt as well, obviously the final resting places of more wealthy and influential members of the church.

Immediately in front of you stands a human wearing the garb of a priest of Jergal, the god of burial and interment, the keeper of the Book of the Dead. His glasses are askew, and there is a strange dark glow on him that makes him look blurry to you.

"More fleshy bodies for my master's army," says a voice that comes from the priest but is definitely not the priest's. "Protect the braziers!" he calls to someone or something that you cannot see deeper in the room.

The priest is being possessed by a **shadow**. Hiding behind the smaller stone rooms are six **cultists**.

TACTICS

The shadow cannot be hurt while any of the braziers are still functioning, though it can still attack. If the characters damage Erve's body, make it obvious that all they are doing is killing an innocent man possessed by an outside force. If they damage Erve two more times, Erve cannot be saved after the shadow leaves his body.

The characters should also be told after the first attack against the possessed Erve that the four **braziers** scattered around the room are magically protecting the creature possessing the priest. Until the braziers are deactivated, they will not be able to defeat the creature. Note that while inside the priest's body, the shadow's speed is 20 ft., and it cannot use its *amorphous* or *shadow stealth* abilities.

The cultists try to protect the braziers, at first hiding and sniping at the characters with slings, and then engaging in melee when the characters get near a brazier.

Abyssal Braziers. In order to remove the protection from the shadow, the four braziers must be knocked over or deactivated. Deactivation requires either a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check as a bonus action from within 30 feet of a brazier, or an action must be spent by a creature adjacent to the brazier to physically tip it over. Physically disturbing the brazier causes 1d4 necrotic damage, as does failing the aforementioned checks.

After 2 braziers are deactivated, the shadow no longer does Strength damage on hits. After all 4 braziers are deactivated, the shadow is forced out of Erve's body and loses all damage resistances.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Weak party:** Remove 2 cultists and the most distance brazier from the door.
- **Strong or very strong party:** Add four cultists and raise the damage done by the braziers to 1d6 necrotic damage.

DEVELOPMENTS

Erve carries with him 4 vials of holy water for those rare instances when the dead he catalogues aren't quite dead. He gladly offers these vials to the characters if they save him, or they can take them if they killed him. If he is still alive, he also offers the characters 200 gold pieces as a reward for saving him.

None of the dead in the crypt have any wealth with them—it has all been looted over the years.

If Erve dies at the hands of the characters, they find his book for cataloging the dead. In the book, an inscription asks that the book be returned to Erve's superior if it is found. Characters who turn the book earn 100 gold pieces as a reward (since they do not get the 200 gp from Erve directly) and make contact with the Order of the Gauntlet.

REWARDS

Make sure the players note their rewards on their adventure log sheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session. If you are playing all of the missions as a single adventure, or playing multiple missions in one session, you can wait and give the rewards for all missions played at the end of the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all **combat experience** earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For **non-combat experience**, the rewards listed are per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Cultist	25
Rothé zombie	100
Shadow	100

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Save Erve from Death	20

The minimum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **75 experience points**. The maximum total award for each character participating in this adventure is **100 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided up according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Erve's Reward	200 (or 100)

HOLY WATER

A description of this item can be found in the *Player's Handbook*.

RENOWN

Order of the Gauntlet characters only receive **one renown point** for saving Erve or returning his book to the faction if he died.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **five downtime days** at the conclusion of this mini-adventure.

DM REWARDS

You receive **100 XP**, **50 gp**, and **five downtime days** for each session you run of this mini-adventure.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

CULTIST

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

SHADOW

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (–2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (–2)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)

Skills Stealth +4 (+6 in dim light or darkness)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

ROTHÉ ZOMBIE

Large undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	6 (–2)	16 (+3)	2 (–5)	6 (–2)	6 (–2)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charge. If the rothé zombie moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 5 (2d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the rothé zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the rothé zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

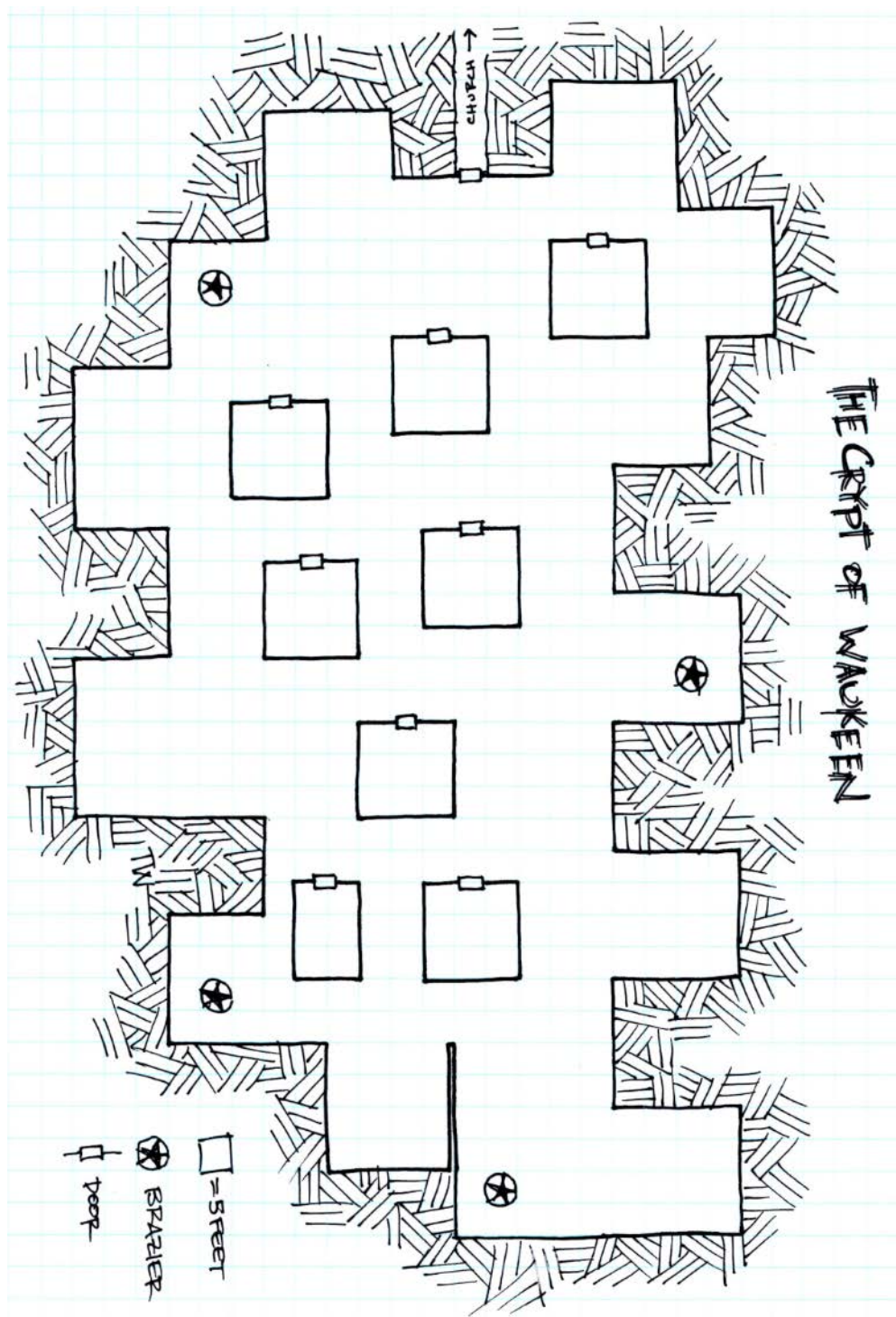
Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

DM APPENDIX: NPC SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Erve (ERF). Male human priest of Jergal. Possessed by a shadow.

MAP: THE CRYPT OF WAUKEEN



RESULTS CODE: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2015

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of August or September 2015, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.



Scott Kurtz
presents

GAUNTLET GOPHERS

by Tavis Maiden





TYPICAL.
JUST BECAUSE
I'M A **DEMON**,
I'M AUTOMATICALLY
'**RAGING**'?

I'M
MILDLY
ANNOYED
AT BEST.



DON'T EVEN
GET US STARTED.

WE RUN INTO THAT
ALL THE TIME.

YEAH,
I GUESS WE
JUST HAVE **RESTING**
RAGE FACE.

(Select to view)

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Next Issue: Dragon 04



We never stop thinking of new ways to improve every aspect of your gaming experience and Issue 4 of Dragon+ will have plenty of tips and tricks to do just that. For starters we'll be digging deeper into the Underdark to look at one of its more hard-hearted races: the Duergar. Featuring strongly in the Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide, we expand on the lives and experiences of these citizens of Gracklstugh, as well as sharing how to deal with them in computer roleplaying game Sword Coast Legends.



We'll also be opening the brass clasp and peeling back the ebony cover of the Demonomicon of Iggwilv, which was written by the legendary demon-summoning witch-queen, to tell you everything you need to know about Belafoss in the same videogame. Don't worry tabletop roleplaying gamers, we'll be also be providing vital statistics on this baddie, along with information that will help you integrate more of the NPC enemies and allies from Sword Coast Legends into your weekly game.

Adam Lee will also be entertaining us all with short story Throne of the Dead. His tale follows a very unusual protagonist who learns that Orcus has installed himself in the mind flayer city of Cyrog. The result: nothing good. Unless you love a good yarn.

(Contents subject to change)



A big thank you to the extended D&D family for
their help with the creation of this issue.

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